

The Dream Of A Game

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Additional Tags:	Realistic Minecraft , Alternate Universe- Survivalist Setting , yeah p much minecraft , with some minecraft mechanics still working but its more survival-y , a lotta bromance , Bromance , Bromance to Romance , please respect dream. like, ik im one to talk over here writing the fanfic abt him but dont harass him and george bc of a gd ship respect the actual people , Death , Temporary Character Death , Past Character Death , Not Really Character Death , george just needs to get good at the game , idk if ill finish this , but it'll defo be on my list of stuff TO do like my other fics i kinda just write with inspo right?, ps if i dont write for a while just beat my inbox up and ill probably do another chapter , Cats , not the movie but they actually have pet cats , i got a plan for the ending , if you want ur sapnap content im sorry but he's probably getting added later , Trauma , they can remember the manhunts and getting killed by eachother , i dont make the rules sorry , Fluff and Angst , Fluff , No Smut , Angst , Panic Attacks , Sharing a Bed , Minor Original Character(s) , by that , i mean that one unnamed librarian villager i popped in , Everyone Needs A Hug , Crushes , Crying , Cuddling & Snuggling , Platonic Cuddling , Accidental Cuddling , if i finish the main plotline of this im planning a cute little , yknow , slice of life oneshot book afterwards, Friendship , Friends to Lovers , Best Friends , Blood , Blood and Injury , Mild Blood , Blood Loss , Major Character Injury
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The Dream Of A Game

by [AnonS28](#)

Summary

Dream and George wake up in a world with odd familiarity.

Notes

HI! 3/1/2020 note! i have been gone for a LONG time. a lot happened that will help me write these scenes a lot better. for one, i've got a boyfriend and i'm slowly remembering what it feels like to be called gay, as an insult, in a loving way. either way, remembering in more clarity what harsh relationship banter is like may be applicable to this fic and how it goes.

i am going to begin revising and getting on a decent writing schedule for this fic again. the slightly pressuring loving comments got to me dude.

ANOTHER NOTE: Nothing that has happened in the Dream SMP will be canon here! the plot was solidified while it was just a small survival world for the original dream team, and it would be a MASSIVE amount of work to redo it now. it's slightly embarrassing, but i really am just a youtube dream fan and the streams are lost on me anyways.

see you soon.

:)

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Chapter 1

Chapter Notes

“You’re leaving?”
“Do you not want me to?”
“No!”
“Really? You don’t want me to?”
“Why would I want you to leave?”

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The first time the man had awoken, he had no clue where he was.

The blades of grass between the human’s fingers flowed in the wind as he mindlessly stared out at the beautiful day that greeted him. Cows and Sheep grazed through the savanna plains, and the grass under him flowed with elegance in the wind. Something didn’t feel right. Yet, everything felt familiar.

Over time, he had gotten up from his spot with the impression that he didn’t have daylight to spare. Instinct seemed to have taken over from there, and without hesitation nor knowing why, he took action. Strolling up to the nearest acacia tree, the newly awoken player slammed his fist into the stern bark that was happy to bite him back.

As the fool who thought he could single handedly down an entire tree cradled his hand on the ground, carefully inhaling deep breaths, he couldn’t help but think, “That should have been easier.” Tears blurred his vision, and though his angered pupils turned to glare at the tree with pure disdain, he was entirely caught off guard when he spotted new marks on the tree. “One more hit would break that.” And, so he hit it again.

By the time an unconscious man with bloody knuckles and half a stack of wood had been found by a rogue wandering trader, it was the middle of the night, and a zombie was already dragging their feet over in a clumsy attempt to eat him. The rest of their undead brethren had already lost interest after shooting an arrow into his shoulder. The trader’s generosity was the reason they found themselves in a village the next day.

That was then, and this was now.

Dream, as he had decided to name himself, was now chopping wood outside- With an axe, this time. Sweat dripped off of his forehead and fell in droplets on the ground, and there was a loud uneasy heave with each lift and swing of the heavy tool in his hands. Green sneakers skid on the ground as they constantly readjusted their footing, yet with each swing throwing the lean man off balance, it was a losing battle. The axe fell against the stump he was working on, and he couldn’t help but smile. A cotton candy shade of pink was beginning to dust the land in a gentle glow, and Dream yawned as he lazily dragged himself down to his house. Downing a bowl or two of soup after a long day always seemed to be a good habit for him, considering the rarity of most other good foods. He was lucky a trader sold him Mycelium to grow large mushrooms on. Dream stumbled into the house as he thought back on the encounter with the trader, the worn axe getting

thrown into a messy corner nearby for him to find tomorrow. Now that the player was more experienced in trading, he knew the cheap ass definitely scammed him.

Preparing food always seemed too easy. A brown mushroom here, a red one right next to it, a bowl underneath. Dream doesn't get why he felt there should be a bigger process to it other than putting the ingredients in the correct order on a crafting bench, and picking up his food. It was just supposed to be that way.

He kicked his feet back on a small seat in his bedroom. Bored silence reigned, and his eyes wandered aimlessly, until he spotted the book that he loaned from the librarian this week. He was quick to start flipping through. Words in the book looked jumbled and twisted, with characters that didn't quite make sense, but he tried to read it. Early on in his life here, likely in the first month, it occurred to Dream that he didn't know this world's language. On days where he had time to meander and talk, the librarian in the village would occasionally try to teach him words. Most of the 'teaching' required Dream to bring in items, that the librarian would identify in annoying murmurs and a sheet of paper with the word written. Dream would often write what the word was to him nearby, and his instructor would nod and talk more in the bullshit language they had. Villagers were loud and annoying, most of the time.

Though he thought he was getting somewhere in his reading session, Dream eventually turned the page to a picture and realized he was holding his book upside down. His bowl lay long empty and abandoned on the table, so he decided it was a good enough day, and time to stop.

He haphazardly walked halfway to his bed, though something flashed into his mind and made him stop. Something had just happened, and with it, came a dull remembrance of something he couldn't quite grasp. Before going to bed, he needed to do something. He stumbled over to his desk, his recollection strengthening as if to tell him, Yes, here you did the thing! He fumbled around and looked past his sword and unsorted papers, trying to remember. But, as quickly as the *deja vu* came, it left. Something was missing on Dream's desk. He vaguely remembered the thing on his desk being something he worked on a lot of the day. Was it a project, maybe? Was he thinking about that time he broke his best sword?

A headache followed Dream to bed. He couldn't help but feel like he abandoned someone today by not working on the thing on his desk. But, that was ridiculous. Because, assuming doing something on his desk could ever have ANY consequence to another being other than him, Dream knew he had always been a charismatic, tryhard loner, more by fate than by choice. The only other sentient beings he even slightly cared about in this realm were the villagers, but... Even then, the village was a bimonthly trip, at best. He had no one to count on but himself.

Right?

George's awakening was to the harsh bite of frost. The cold nipped away at every piece of him as he hastily got up from his spawn, and rushed into the blinding snow. Shaking, sobbing breaths poured from his mouth as white smokey exhales clouded his glasses, and he warbled on feet he could no longer feel. He didn't know where he was, or where he was going. The antagonizing feel of being chipped away at by frost was present, always. As if he was a glass statue that snow wanted to delicately reduce to nothingness.

It took him a short amount of time to realize that death was a temporary inconvenience laced with incredibly agony, in this new realm. He, at first, hypothesized that, should he die enough, the pain would dull over time. But with each death cry and panic attack into the world of living, George realized the cruel grip of pain never lost bite.

It took him over a day to craft a sturdy boat and begin to cross the nearby ocean, and night had fallen by then. An abandoned shipwreck on the shore of a desert was the first land he saw, and the place he decided to shelter at for the night.

George eventually settled into the captain's quarters for the night, and had little choice but to sleep on the ground. His shades sat next to the skeletal remains of one of the crewmates, whose bones were in the chest nearby before he accidentally scattered them. The survivor knew he would probably catch a cold from the weird soup he was forced to eat, or the extreme change in temperature, but that was a future-George problem.

An odd feeling of both *deja vu* and loneliness overtook him, though. This was supposed to be... Fun. He knew it was. He felt as in, oh, there should be someone here with him. Two people, even, both of which he didn't know and couldn't identify. George desperately wanted to say a joke, something absolutely stupid and teasing, and hear laughter. But... That could never happen. He hasn't known anyone else, right? No, I couldn't have, He confirmed to himself, though the feeling persisted. How could he know that he could have known someone, without having known someone?

George paused to think about that for a moment, but gave up with a dismissive, confused huff and laid back to sleep.

He decided that day, as his consciousness passed it's control off to weird, mystical dreams, that he wanted to explore the world. Sure, he liked adventure, but that wasn't his goal. His goal was much stupider. Logically, the fictional people he missed but didn't know- they couldn't be there. All he had was the blue-shirted man with killer shades lounging on the rough stone ground- himself. However, something told him they did. And, so his goal was set for this world.

George would find someone out there.

Chapter End Notes

hope y'all enjoyed chapter one. chapter twos in the works. cya guys soon.

Chapter 2

Chapter Summary

Dream and George catch wind of each other. George chases after the one thing he's been searching for from the beginning.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Dream had a severe problem.

The wounded and dying man stumbled through the caverns of the mine shaft, a limp on his foot, and his forearm mangled. Blood, thick and red, dripped through his bandages, and his ragged, heaving breaths were making his head even hazier than it already was. But he couldn't stop, not with the rattle of bones and the accompanying draw of a bowstring ringing close behind. He nudged his mask up and forced himself to wolf down a part of a loaf before he continued running. Bread would have to suffice as a substitute for his health, for now.

Eventually, the rotting wood and cramped caverns opened up and ended at a gaping ravine. A split second of terror reached the young man's eyes, but he was already leaping the gap to the other side.

He knew that if he didn't slam the correct block under his feet in time, he would die from this height. But there was a trained elegance to his movements, and his margin of error was minuscule. He didn't fall then. Nor, did he fall the next time. Or the time after that. His feet stung from the abrupt landings he occasionally made, but none harsh enough to down him. He was dancing throughout the ravine, without a full heart to his name.

Arrows whizzed by his head, and creepers ran behind him like ticking time bombs that only lost track when he leaped distances they couldn't. One nearly imploded on him on point-blank. What he was doing was risky and abrasive. He should have just holed in place and waited until he healed a little. But the adrenaline in his blood was a drug that droned out the negatives, from pain to any sense of self-preservation- It just gave him the incentive to do it again. Though he would never choose to nearly die on purpose, Dream wasn't opposed to extreme parkour afterward. It was a problem.

Eventually, when the rush wore off, and his arm began to emit another round of searing pain, he skidded into the mine shaft again, a completely new sector closer to bedrock. He could hear skeletons rearing their bows and running towards him, so he quickly packed the entrance way with dirt. Muffled shots fired into the mound seconds later, and he let out an exasperated sigh.

Then, an unusual sound reached his ears and made his breathing halt altogether. The familiar thud of a pickaxe hitting rubble could be heard. Except, his pick was fastened to his back, on top of the rest of his gear. His taunt limps went rigid, and his eyes constricted. He was on high alert.

It was soft. Faint. As if deep underground, and barely in earshot. Dream, briefly, considered digging closer to the sound, yet, he couldn't go without whatever was there hearing *him*. Three more blocks of rubble crumbled, each closer to him. Dream pressed against the wall, trying his hardest to catch any sounds they might make. Less and less space was left between the two entities until there was a single block between them. The masked man held his breath, listening to the heavy heaving of whoever else was there. He heard familiar words under his breath. "Fuck" and "Shit." Even a full sentence when he heard his pick clang against the wall: "Why am I doing this?"

A cocktail of emotions was churning in Dream's stomach, but fear was at the top of the ingredient list. However, their curiosity also piqued the injured miner. Someone was here, with the same language as them. Possibly, someone who *looked* like him. Sweat was starting to build and creep down Dream's face, but he reached up under his worn mask and wiped the grime with a shaking hand.

It became known to him early on that, though sentient, villagers didn't have the same motivations or abilities of him, even past the language barrier. Frankly, Villagers were dumber than cow shit. Well, minus the librarian, who had a couple more brain cells. That aside, all of them had schedules and regulations and stuck to them religiously. No hobbies, no interests, not even favorite foods, minus bread- Just rigorous routines to keep their village going. In theory, they could break them, but something told Dream it was a near-impossible task. They weren't programmed to know anything but their daily tasks, and they were content with that.

The prospect of someone like him enchanted him enough to consider slamming his pick into the block next to him. Whoever was behind the wall was, apparently, taking a break to eat. Dream shifted close enough to hear it. It sounded like... Some sort of bread and stew. He was about to guess mushroom, whenever he caught an unsettling crunch that made him involuntarily shiver. No, that was definitely a rabbit swimming in there.

The messy-haired miner adjusted the iron helmet on his head and waited patiently until the traveler, whoever it was, decided his break was over. Bowls clattered on the stone, before being put away. He heard the pick being heaved back up and froze in anticipation. What if they broke their pattern and clamored their way into his little space, just a wall away?

But, the pick didn't crash into his wall, of course. It went straight, as it had been going. After they were a bit further away, Dream finally released his long-held breath and grasped his shirt into a bundle. His heart beat like a stallion's gallops under his hand, but he couldn't stop it. It took

several fearful moments of sweaty palms, ringing in his ears, and a heaving chest for his heart rate to stabilize. Finally, when he considered it safe, Dream stopped leaning on the wall and stretched his sore bones as they cracked. Whoever it was had likely found his ravine, and left the crawlspace. He was safe.

But, something still had Dream staring at the wall. He needed to know if he was crazy or not. He needed to take a chance and break into the hole the other player dug out. If for no other reason than to convince himself. He raised his pick.

Dream hadn't considered the possibility that this new player would see his cobble in the ravine, and large, oreless holes in the mine shaft beyond. That goes without mentioning the countless dead mobs about, and the shield he left cracked in half. Dream had long left the mine shaft and found his horse to ride home by the time he had even considered all the clues he left, and by that time, it was obviously too late to make amends. A dismayed miner with killer shades eventually crawled out to the surface after finding what Dream had left. He knew he had no time to waste if he wanted to see the other miner.

Though they both had mixed reactions over their regrettably gained knowledge, Dream and the stranger from the mine now had confirmations for both their hopes and fears: they weren't alone.

George had to admit that the villagers were staring at him quite a bit more than usual. Though, with his current complexion, maybe they had some justification for their judgment. Dark rings encircled his eyes and dirt-covered patches of his face and stained his clothes. His armor was worn and broken, and his glasses even seemed to look more of an off-white, creamy color than usual.

It wasn't until he walked into the librarian's shop that he considered anything else might be off.

His footsteps and the creak of the door announced his arrival, and the villager raised a hand to him, clearly working on something. He nodded, though the librarian clearly couldn't see him, and took a seat at a table nearby. George took the extra time to go through his supplies, which were running low.

His sword was worn and dull, along with the rest of his tools, but he was sure a visit to the local blacksmith could yield him a fix on those. He had a few slices of bread left, and part of a cow he slaughtered and killed earlier, but he decided he could probably get away with a couple hay bales without suspicion if he hurried. A few bottles of water were left in his bag, though he would have to refill the glass canisters soon. He glanced over one of the bottles on the table briefly, though he

caught his reflection and immediately snapped his attention back onto it. *God*, He couldn't help but think, *I look this bad?* He held the glass level with himself and inspected his reflection again. Greasy hair, scratched up and dirty skin, beige glasses- He looked like a pig. Hell, *pigs take better care of themselves! How longs' it been since I showered?*

Several minutes were put into staring at himself, dumbfounded, until he caught the librarian staring at him too. They seemed confused and worried and didn't immediately recognize George had caught their gaze. Even whenever they snapped out of it and warmly offered their products, something didn't feel right. George couldn't shake the feeling that, though it was likely his appearance, the villager was staring for an entirely different reason.

Regardless, their business deal went well. George was able to, barely, afford a mending book off the villager, and was able to sell off ink sacs he didn't have use for. A hint of surprise hit him whenever he saw how many deals the villagers offered up for trade. Most just offered him a book, and maybe a paper deal if his luck was up. He didn't enter villages often, though, and shut his mouth so he wouldn't offend their business partner.

George eventually stood up and started to gather his stuff, minus the emeralds he left on the table. The librarian had shut up, their attention fully fixated on him. He paid no mind, but as he turned to leave, he felt a hand on his arm that made him freeze. "Um." The villager had an odd expression on their face as they stopped them, as if uncertain, yet they gestured for him to sit back down. Intrigued by the bizarre behavior, and slightly worried, he watched as the villager gathered supplies from nearby. They sat opposite him, eventually, bearing a book and quill. They dipped the quill in ink, and George scooted closer, looming over the table to watch.

A smiley face. George didn't quite know what he was expecting, but it certainly wasn't a fucking smiley face. Professionalism be damned, he started chuckling, which quickly snowballed into outright laughter. The villager didn't seem pleased, but George truly couldn't help it, laughing through his apologies every time his eyes hit the paper. The tradesman grumpily continued his artistic endeavors.

As he continued drawing, George finally calmed down enough to start watching the bald man continue his sketches. The smiley finally was given a body, though the adventurer still thought it looked hilarious. However, beside him was another, very different figure. The reader's wobbly hand depicted the only stick figure with a nose and unibrow. They were holding a piece of paper out, and the librarian was currently attempting to draw a weird lump he suggested was emerald in the smiley's hand. George stopped laughing.

His fingers tapped against the wood impatiently, and the villager finished, looking up at him and expecting a reaction. But something was a bit off. George knew his glasses were huge on his face. The darkened lenses that hid his eyes were his most identifying feat, and more incriminatingly, the villager had drawn glasses for themselves. Crudely, but they could tell the crooked squares were

lenses. But the figure didn't have any. "Is that me?" George asked, more himself than anyone. The villager looked at him dumbly, waiting for a signed translation, and George eventually realized he talked aloud. "Sorry," He said reflexively. He pointed at the smiley. "Is that—" the grimy hand retreated from the paper, poking the miner's chest multiple times for emphasis. "-Me?"

The villager began to draw again, a frustrated look on their face. George took that as a no and waited for confirmation. Emotions churned in him, as he looked over the crude drawings in a new light. Was this the person he was trying to track this entire time? His fingers began to nervously tap against the splintered table once again. *It's been months.*

What George found that day had freaked him out. His main goal in mining that small strip mine had been to gather iron and diamonds. When he broke into the ravine, he thought it was his lucky day. It wasn't. He remembered, vividly, when he found the blood. The cobblestone was odd and all, but after crossing the completely oreless ravine, he found a mine shaft sector nearly coated in the red substance. George eventually caught track of the exact path the dying animal, person, villager- *Whatever* had taken. Something blew up a part of the mine, and gravel had fallen and crushed someone. George was able to find green scraps of clothes and a sword hidden in the rubble, so he was confident the blood started there. Not far from the original explosion, whoever was here had a shield blown up. The discarded item lay in a pool of blood and rubble. George could feel himself starting to get sick at the sight.

From then on out, the feet jogged down the red trail with a quickened pace. The worried player was half expecting to find someone crying for help at the end of the trail. But, no. What he did find was a shred of bandages. The path became a small dribble that was easy to miss, but regardless, relief flooded his system, and George no longer felt a sickening pit in his stomach. Uncovering a dead body was no longer the end goal here.

George ran and jumped the extra mile. Parkour was surprisingly hard for him, but he was in too big a rush to bridge. Any scuffed knees and hard landings that came with his inexperience were accepted, and they were just thankful they didn't fall. Confusion completely clouded his mind whenever he made the last jump. This was his entrance. Any trail of cobblestone or blood ended here. Why?

It took a minute to see it. He didn't believe his eyes at first. His calloused hands traced the ragged, cutting stone, just inside his entrance, directly at the spot he sat and ate at half an hour ago. Rock and dust had settled on the rabbit bones he'd set next to his side, and a bowl he left behind was filled with rubble. His hands began to shiver slightly, and his firm, focused expression was crumbling; His eyebrows knit into each other, and his jaw slacked. Terrified eyes glanced off to a small entryway next to the doorway he created. He noticed much earlier it was blocked off with dirt, but he thought it was natural. He didn't think much of it, considering he didn't yet understand the mess of rubble and stone as a trail. But now?

Someone was here. Someone knew *he* was here. And someone had sat behind a wall, listened in, stalked him as he dined, and waited until he left to exit.

His thoughts were interrupted when an annoyed and ignored librarian gently slapped his face a few times to yank him back to reality. His eyes refocused, and he found that another figure popped up on the other side of the smiley- one with large glasses covering their head, rather than any semblance of a face. An equal sign was drawn between his representation and the first sketch and promptly crossed out. The villager still had an annoyed look on his face, and George watched as others milled about to the town center in the streets outside. George nodded in confirmation that he understood, and the villager sighed, beginning to pack up the supplies on the table. George was the one who reached out and grabbed their arm, this time. “W-Wait! Where, um, can I find them?”

The villager raised an eyebrow, but shrugged off his hand and continued to pack up their supplies. George slumped back into his chair, defeated as the villager began to walk away. They only made it a short distance, though, before turning to a bookshelf and retrieving more paper. George perked up, eagerly reaching out to take the paper- But his hand was slapped away with a disgruntled mumble. They were confused, considering the villager WAS holding it out to give them it- until the librarian stuck their other hand out. “Oh.” This was a business deal.

The adventurer was left plenty of time to himself after giving up all his money for what turned out to be a map and some loose paper. His new friend was long gone, but they did leave a lantern lit on the table. It still crackled and burned hot, the candle inside of it slowly melting into a pool of wax. It provided enough light to read by.

Everything but the map was crumpled up and had clearly been thrown away at some point. George started reading the paper first, if for no other reason than the wrinkled texture drew his attention more. It was all, surprisingly, in English, which caught George off guard.

“I took one of your books,” The note read in scratchy handwriting. “Ems are in the chest -dream.”

George set the note down gently on the table and immediately dropped his head into one of his hands. His fingers threaded his greasy hair and tried to rub away the disbelief. What was this?

The silence of the shop was deafening, with the only sound originating from old wood creaking and transforming. A night breeze blew in from a second-story window and left the worried customer to shiver in the bleak lantern light.

The rest of the notes were similar. An “I took something,” or a thank you note. All signed by “Dream.” His eyes glazed over the bad drawing he could no longer find humor in, and then the note. “Dream” has been here. More than once, apparently. And chances are, he would be again.

Plan B would be to stay at the village until Dream returns to meet him, and it would be Plan A if George didn’t have a map to his house. The drafted map was unremarkable in every way, exception being it had two marked waypoints- The village, and a small clearing in the forest. There seemed to be a blurry shape that could be a house, and George was willing to take his chances in following it. Regardless, the villager gave it to him with the notes. It’s crystal clear to George where it led.

The lantern was blown out, and George swept his stuff off the table and into his bag. Sometimes, a destination and a rush of determination were all it took to find destiny.

Chapter End Notes

hi!! i tried lol

anyways, really, hope yall enjoyed this chapter! i tried my best to rlly capture George and dream's personalities in this, but I notoriously have some trouble doing that. like, alright, we already know dream is a fucking maniac when it comes to extreme parkour and risk taking in not at all appropriate situations, and george? i feel like george would definitely get scammed by a villager because he's too nice to protest being sold something they dug outta the trash.

i didn't rlly like george's part of the chapter bc it mentioned the villager too much and was a bit too much of a inserted npc no one wants, but i promise he won't be major past this chapter and one of the very end ones. either way, proud of dream's pov. we start next chapter at george. cyall!

Chapter 3

Chapter Summary

An encounter does not go as expected.

Chapter Notes

hey! glad y'all been enjoying, the next chapters up. ps, if you ever need an indicator as to if i've posted or not; i always respond to comments whenever i get on to post the next chapter. if your comment's answered, expect the next chapter lol. have fun with this one :)

George didn't quite know what to do.

His current predicament was something he put little to no thought into. As scratchy as the damn stuff was, the tall grass worked seamlessly with the night to give him cover as he spied on the well-lit building in this distance. But his goal wasn't to stare at a building till he fell asleep. *How am I supposed to approach him?*

The unknown stalker outside Dream's house didn't expect to get this far so suddenly. If he was asked yesterday about his plan upon reaching their home, he would have been confident there was plenty of time to throw one together. His heart beat steadily, but he swore he could listen as it thumped in his ears and silenced his thoughts. George didn't know anything about the person inside those homey walls.

The first thing to consider is how he would walk up. He took a shower earlier, of course, but he was wondering if that was a poor decision. What if Dream had less empathy for him now that he didn't look like he was in urgent need? What if him looking sharp gave Dream less reason to want to speak to him? At the same time, though, maybe he did make the right decision. Dream might be more willing to be friends with someone more neat and tidy.

...Oh, and he smelled like burnt dog shit earlier. They probably wouldn't have appreciated that.

George really wanted to be Dream's friend. He really wanted a friend, period. Flashes of thoughts and small desires wound through his head momentarily. What if, instead of racing back post mortem to pull his supplies off his dead body after an untimely death, he had someone to comfort

him and help him retrieve it when he woke up? What if he didn't have to spend evenings alone anymore. They could have campfires, and long walks, maybe they could even go adventuring together- George had to force himself back to the present. He confirmed, this had to be the best way to achieve that, though small alarm bells of doubt rung in his mind.

Next, he had to decide what to do with his gear. He didn't know what type of gear Dream would have. Has he discovered iron, yet? George considered it a moment and felt his cheeks burn with embarrassment over the absolutely ridiculous question. Dream took all the supplies from the ravine. He probably had diamond gear.

Deciding he would be here a while preparing, and the bright glow of the house wouldn't fade anytime soon, the overwatcher decided he didn't need to be so rigid. He sat down behind a nearby tree, resting his head in his palms while considering his options.

Dream at least had iron gear. But would it be wise to show up decked out in iron armor this late anyway? Would that be grounds for Dream to consider it an attack? With a sigh, George thought it through again and nodded, agreeing with himself. It would be regarded as a bit overwhelming and be grounds for his newfound 'friend' to be defensive. As quietly as possible, the slightly buffer man started to pull his gear off himself. The metal clanked and rattled quietly as he finished pulling his chest plate over his head. The cold night air immediately attacked his less insulated skin, and a shiver ran down his spine. He clasped his arms around his shaking form to keep warm, air seething through his teeth. The change was incredibly minor, but George's reaction was naturally dramatic. It was cold before, and the removal of his armor reminded him why he kept it on. Regardless, this was necessary. He shimmed out of his metal pants, leaving only the blue T-shirt and jeans he wore underneath.

A sword. A primary tool of protection for many travelers, and one that Dream could undoubtedly recognize as a necessity. Regardless, it was an instrument of death. It could be seen as threatening. George was unsure of whether or not to take it.

Oh, fucking hell. He needed to stop hesitating so much. The player sheathed it on his back with his other supplies he opted to take.

Lastly: He needed to decide on what to say. The lights from the house still cast a warm, lovely glow to even the coldest reaches of the dark wood's edge. George leaned out from his cover to glance towards the hazy light, which felt so far away. He could always tell Dream the truth. "Hi, I'm George," He would say. That's a good start.

"I know you stalked me once in a mine shaft, so I stalked you for three months. I paid off your friends for information on you, like your address, name, and even a—" Intrusive thoughts weren't being helpful right now. A hurt sigh escaped him, and he watched the misty cloud it produced

dissipate in the night air. He needed a *simplified* truth. “Hi, I’m George,” He restarted, his lips loosely mouthing his thoughts this time. “I think we’re the only two people in this world. I think we should stick together.” He didn’t know if it was good enough, but it would have to do.

Holding the tree for support, George stood up again and tried his best to look... Confident. Or, at least competent. Regardless of the goal, he failed miserably due to his expression, one that was sweaty and twisted into a grimace of cringe. He could already imagine all the ways this could go wrong, and it wasn’t helping him look very confident.

He sighed, slapping his own face to wake himself up a little. This was his big moment. He was about to meet “Dream.” Though terror rang through his mind and screamed for him to leave, excitement and giddiness forced butterflies in his stomach. George was too far gone. He couldn’t leave this.

Walking up to the front door was a much calmer trip than expected. The small trail paved in front of the humble house was unorderly and wild, yet retained some natural charm. George decided he liked the rosebushes, though they were more or less just an excuse for him to keep his eyes off the door.

His tannish hand stuck out from the dark oak door as George traced his hand over the wood he intended to knock on. There would be a knock, he told himself- No backing out. The visitor tightened his jaw, swallowed his fear, and closed his hand into a fist. Hesitation gripped him as he reared his hand back. Three quick raps, and the door was open.

George didn’t quite expect it to creak open so effortlessly, yet the dark wooden door yielded and gave entrance to the house with ease. Why was it unlocked? Was Dream gone?

Black, scuffed boots moved without his permission, and he was inside the house. The homely, welcoming warmth was a stark contrast to night air’s sting. The smell of mushrooms and warm bread floated from the small corner the kitchen was crammed to and made his mouth water, and George didn’t yet recognize that as a red flag. The stone brick flooring was cracked in some places, but clean, and well kept throughout the house. He spotted the back half of a cat sleeping on the floor behind one of the chairs in the living room, right nearby a hallway he was sure led to more.

He stepped further and further into the house, basking in the atmosphere, and not recognizing the sound of the door creaking the rest of the way open behind him. To his credit, he felt his muscles instinctively jolt as a crossbow string was pulled back, and his hand was fast to grab at the sword on his back- But not fast enough. Fingertips had barely grasped the hilt when the crossbow was fully loaded, and a stern warning greeted him.

“Don’t you dare fucking move.”

Dream didn’t know what to do with his new ‘friend.’

His late-night venture to the woods had been unexpected. His meal was tasting bland today, and he decided that he might attempt to spice it up with the rare treat of desserts. He had an egg, somewhere, and an absolute abundance of pumpkins, but he lacked in sugar. Regardless, there was sugar cane out by a nearby pond. He would survive a short trip out.

He’d run out the back exit, dodging and dashing as fast as he could past the skeletons taking a leisurely aim at him. He was in the underbrush before long, and no longer as concerned for his well being. The pond wasn’t far, and the rush of a night quest was exhilarating. Even if it was just slashing a dumb plant, he saw then zipping before something dangerous caught him.

Turns out, the cane was somewhat straightforward to find. He caught a smirk of satisfaction on his face that he couldn’t get rid of, even if his goal wasn’t a huge task. His sword sliced through the plant efficiently, leaving part of it to grow back while Dream held the other large segments. The dripping sap from them coated his hand, annoyingly, but he examined them and determined it could make roughly a couple ounces of sugar each. He could make two pies with that.

The trip home was uneventful. A spider attempted to attack him, but he was a fast runner. The only other thing he saw was a creeper, and that was far off. Finally, home was again in sight. He could spend the rest of the day baking, eating, and playing with Patches, his most recent addition to the family. His hand hovered over the knob of his back door, close enough to feel the cold air around the metal, when he heard 3 knocks and his front door opening. He peeked through the window, took out his crossbow, and snuck around the house- And here they were.

The intruder was now sitting on the couch with an expression he could only compare to a guilty kid who got their hand stuck in the cookie jar. At this point, they were successfully de-armed of their one weapon, and he’d personally pat them down to make sure there weren’t more. The stranger’s hands twisted and wrung, and their leg bounced with impatience. Dream’s weapon was loaded on his side of the coffee table, and they eyed it with unease.

After having thrown the sugar cane on the kitchen island, the masked man came to sit across from the one who ruined his night. He settled for the floor to be closer to the table. The man’s backpack was in front of them, and Dream was dutifully rooting through while they looked down at their ever-moving sweaty palms.

There wasn't a lot in the bag, really. A few pitiful slices of stale bread, a pickaxe, a compass. At the bottom, there were a few pieces of paper that caught his eye. When Dream uncrumpled them onto the table, his own handwriting shocked them. These were his notes left to the librarian. He glared up at the man sitting across from him, but they were purposefully not looking at him. He noticed their habit of wringing their hands had devolved into picking scars and scabs instead.

The stranger heard his mouth open to speak, and Dream saw their head nod up to attention. The stifling silence that carried over everything but the rummaging of tools was ended. "Start talking."

They looked at him, mouth partially agape before they regained composure and asked in a squeaky, quiet voice, "W-What?" Dream didn't even look up from his nimble hand's work on the oak table as more items got pulled out. "Start talking before I shoot you in the ass. What did you do to the librarian?"

"I-I didn't do anything to them! We had a—" They squeaked out an answer, but the items he'd found had his blood boiling enough to turn his full attention to the suspect murderer. Dream's fist on the table shut him up. "Liar!" He shouted and clambered up, pointing an accusatory finger at the criminal cowering under him. Their leg stopped fidgeting, and they completely froze. "If you didn't do something, why do you have his stuff? What the fuck did you—"

"-He sold it to me! E-Everything in there is stuff he sold—"

"No! You don't even have money, how did you 'bUy' this—" Dream mocked him, but he kept responding.

"-I spent it all on this, I s-swear, please—" His guest was squeaking and on the verge of tears, but Dream didn't let up. He leaned forward to grab the crossbow.

"Bullshit! Why would he sell the map to my house? Why—"

"-He drew a picture of you!" Dream halted his next response, confused by the claim. The scared man had hoisted his legs up onto the couch, trying to cringe further away from him and into the couch cushions. His voice came out quiet and shaky.

"He d-drew a sketch of you. I went in to buy supplies, and he grabbed my arm and sat me down. He told me where to find you."

Dream's mouth closed, his jaw going rigid. That sounded like something they would do. The librarian might have had a few brain cells, but not many. His boiling blood went cold. In giving them his location, the forehead didn't quite consider the fact that he wasn't warned, and never expects unknown visitors with suspicious items.

Silently, they rolled out the rest of the papers, and quickly caught sight of it. Dream had only seen the villager draw anything on one other occasion when trying to explain a verb to him. The rough sketches of him, them, and the stranger were drawn by his wobbly hand. His eyes shut as he

reached under the mask and pinched the bridge of his nose. A sigh escaped him. He'd made a mistake.

"What's your name." He calmly asked.

"G-George." They answered.

"I'm sorry."

Dream had, eventually, returned George's stuff to him, and started on making the pumpkin pie in the oven. An awkward silence had prevailed since his apology, despite him putting away his bow and trying his best to calm his guest down some. He coaxed Patches, who'd bolted at his yelling, back in the living room, and left her to sit with them. George seemed to at least partially enjoy the company.

Warm, almost searing air wafted in his face as he checked the bread and pie in the oven, and he was quick to close the door again. George had, mostly, been quiet after the confrontation. It only fueled Dream's internal turmoil. He felt like a piece of shit. Honestly, this is EXACTLY what he'd wanted to happen, right? Though it wasn't necessarily urgent or top priority to him, Dream was undeniably lonely. A real person, with free will, similar interests, and the same language? Dream wanted something like that.

From what he gathered in small mutters, George had known about him for a while and been following his trail. Knowing that they probably were excited about this meeting made him feel even more of an asshole.

He glanced back at George after getting the soup to a boil. They still looked uneasy, and a frustrated sadness was racking his face, but they had relaxed enough to be petting Patches, who was fast asleep on his side. Dream's face turned back to the boiling, dull pink mess on top of the oven. He was surprised George hadn't bolted out of his house as soon as he had his gear back. The hoodied cook was suggesting that was a good sign. This was still an amenable situation.

The soup looked roughly done, and the bread looked good enough, so he took the loaves out of the oven and prepped some bowls. He sacrificed his usual bowl for his guest, and blew dust off one he found in the very back of the cabinet. It would probably be fine to eat out of. He filled both bowls and swiped the bread before he walked across the room. "Hey," Dream alerted him softly as he came closer to the table, balancing the bowls and bread in his hands. He set George's food on his

side of the coffee table and settled on the floor across from him. Dream spared a glance at him as he lowered himself onto the floor, but otherwise, started eating at his soup.

Neither really enjoyed the silence, but starting a conversation seemed impossibly hard on both sides. After all, what the hell do you say to a home invader? Or, what to a man who threatened your life?

Dream was the first one to take the bullet, halfway through his soup. “So, how long have you known about me?”

It was a simple question, and George seemed to be expecting conversation to start at some point. He wiped soup from his mouth with the back of his hand, and gave a halfhearted shrug, “I don’t know. Maybe a few months?” He questioned, biting the inside of his cheek as he looked over to his half-eaten bread and reconsidered it. “Yeah. Let’s just say three months.” Dream nodded.

“Where did you first find out I existed?” That didn’t make a lot of sense, and Dream put down his soup to free up his hands as he talked. “Well, I mean, Was there a first sign? When did you first realize, ‘Yeah, someone else has been here’?” The soup was picked back up after the question was asked, but George seemed to have stopped eating entirely and gone rigid across the table. His eyes seemed semi-panicked. The brunet was staring off into space with an expression that made Dream think he was overly concentrated on willing himself to teleport away. He didn’t know if they were going to answer the question at this point, or if the table would once again fall silent. Either way, his curiosity was piqued.

“The ravine.” He said, and Dream’s entire being seemed to deflate. George, having his fears confirmed by his hosts’ frown and sudden slouching, looked equally perturbed. Both of them had lost their appetite now.

“That was you,” The words quietly left Dream’s mouth. Then, a pause. “We need to talk about that,” The masked man said, leaning forward and combing his hand through his hair. He let his cheek on his other palm, and he tried to ignore how drained his face looked. That was him in the ravine?

“We do.” Neither wanted to do anything. But, they needed to. George’s hand went to tap at the edge of the table, and across from him, Dream continued to wrack a row through his messy blonde hair. Readjusting his glasses, George decided it was his turn to break the silence.

“Why did you sit there and listen to me eat?” Was blurted out. Dream’s jolt of surprise was immediate, and he got the sinking feeling that he should have just waited for them to start talking instead. Nevertheless, it was a good question.

“I didn’t have a choice! I was blocked in by the time you came in, and-”

“And you sit there with your ear pressed to the wall listening to someone? I saw your little space, your blood was nowhere else but at my wal-” The pair were both getting equally frustrated, and the banter went to and fro across multiple topics. Neither were necessarily mad, but the argument continued on its fuel of pure stubbornness and pent up confusion.

“-Rabbit tastes good, fuck you Dream! You just eat this pink shit so often it clouds your head-” George wasn’t tapping the table anymore, but gripping it. His nails dug into the wood as Dream continued yelling.

“Oh, so now it’s pink shit? It wasn’t pink shit when you were wolfing it down a few minutes ago! Come on, look at your bowl, it’s empty!” Beads of sweat were building up behind his mask, but he was too worked up to care. As they continued yelling, Dream couldn’t help but feel this felt like several months worth of pent up anger was finally crashing down in a volatile yelling match. It was the screaming, irrationally loud George, vs. the hardly controlled shouting of Dream. Neither knew where this was going.

“-God, you’re such a stalker! You sat there and listened to me in a private mome-” Hearing that leave George’s mouth is what tipped Dream from frustrated to pissed. He stood up on his knees, leaning over the coffee table. George didn’t look intimidated.

“Oh, I’m the fucking stalker? You followed me for months, to my house! Not to mention strolling riiight on in-”

“-You left the door open, dumbass-”

“And? Why the fuck did you follow me here? Why didn’t you piss off and go live, George? Huh? T-”

A sudden fist slammed into the center of the table, severely shaking their food. George sat up and leaned over their meal. “I was lonely, you piece of shit! Living without anyone to be happy with in this godforsaken shithole isn’t fucking living!”

Dream hadn’t expected George to shout so loud, or slam his fist into the table as violently as he did, and the words he planned to say died in his throat. A few minutes of tense silence followed as the duo stared each other down. George’s eyebrows were arched angrily, and he was starting to sweat to accompany his heaving breaths and red face. Dream’s tense, almost snarl-like frown was set in place.

George was the first to back off, breaking his gaze away from Dream’s mask to glare at his mostly finished bowl. He heard his host mutter something as they both sat back down.

“I’m lonely here too.”

The white-glassesed survivalist didn’t expect that from him, but his emotions were feeling too dull to adequately react after his explosive outburst. It took a few more minutes of silence for George to regain enough competence to speak. “I’m sorry I yelled.”

“I’m sorry I started the yelling-” They started to say, but George dismissed it. “No. I started it.”

The silence stretched on much longer than expected this time. Dream had eventually returned to nibbling on his bread, so they followed suit and started on theirs. Dinner continued on a lot more peacefully, and the silence, oddly, didn’t feel as awkward and stifling as it ordinarily did. From the kitchen, both could smell the pie. It would be ready any minute now.

“I think I’ve been alone too long,” Dream admitted, sighing as he took up his friend’s fidgeting habit and wrung his hands. “I shouldn’t have gotten so mad at you. Guess I’ve just been pent up.” He explained, mumbling the last little sentence under his breath. “... I’m sorry I messed this up...”

After taking several agonizing moments to finish his bread, George finally responded to them, much to their relief. Little did they know, he had a proposition. “We were both idiots who didn’t know how to act. I, um, was really was looking forward to meeting you and stuff... I’m not going to lie and say I didn’t get disappointed at how things went...” Dream’s stomach lurched. He was about ready to leave and jump off the nearest cliff, but George continued with a slightly lighter, more desperate tone. His lips cracked upwards in a smile that looked only somewhat forced. “I still think this could work, though. I mean, we’re both all we got.” He muttered, a slight crack hitting his voice as he wiped his eyes behind the glasses. His head tilted up, and even through the black lens of his shades, Dream knew precisely how he was looking at him. “Wanna try?”

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Dream and George have a breakfast, and set out on an adventure.

Chapter Notes

heyhey! hope y'all enjoy this chapter. i notice i kinda suck at writing conversations, of like, two people talking, but i'm working on it i swear! i hope this chapter did it a bit better than last, i'm super grateful for any and all critiques!! thank you sm

ps, i thought i should mention, i'm actually looking for a beta reader(s)! if anyone may be interested, just drop discord or twitter down in the comments and you'll get chapters way early- enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Dream was the first to wake up the next morning. His groggy eyes snapped open, and with that, he realized he was in bed, for once. He was lying crookedly off the side with one arm stretched towards the floor, and his face smushed into a pillow less mattress, but at least he actually made it to the bed for once. A groan escaped him as he lazily pulled his cold arm back under the warmth of his covers.

Thoughts of George and last night temporarily popped into his head as he lay in bed. His mind was too awake to sleep again, but his body was too cozy to immediately get up. George might have ended things on a good note, but that didn't mean all his thoughts weren't necessarily pleasant. A headache started exploding in his temple as he remembered his paranoid and irrationally cruel actions. His hands grabbed at his pillow, and he shoved his head into it as he groused. Last night, Dream did make one right move and had offered him a place to stay for the night. His guest now slept in the living room, just outside his door. Dream knew that too well, primarily because a stranger sleeping in his house kept him up and worked up for an extra hour or two. He had to shove a knife into his mattress before his overactive imagination let him have a millisecond of shut-eye last night.

Last night was... Not an optimal first meeting. But, they amended it, Dream reminded himself. They made a mutual agreement to be friends, or, if that was unmanageable, at least allies. His memories flashed back to George's slightly red face as he discussed the simple agreement to friendship. It was funny to him how the shorter man seemed immediately relieved as soon as Dream had taken his shaky, sweaty palm and shook it. A smile curled up from one of the corners of his mouth. That was good enough.

Dream wondered what today would be like. He told George he was welcome to stay as long as wanted, and he doubted they already made for a morning getaway.

Probably not.

His mostly-certain knowledge was confirmed when he heard a groan from the living room, shortly followed by the rustle of blankets, something hopping off the couch, and the loud steps and quiet pitter-patters of six pairs of feet. It seemed Patches liked him, at least.

Dream took several more minutes of hesitation before leaving bed himself. Regardless, he did, flinging covers off himself and tugging on his usual clothes from his bedroom floor. He nearly forgot his mask, but grabbed the two-way plastic and lazily adjusted it onto his face, albeit a bit crooked. He was stumbling into the hallway moments later, ill-fatedly crashing into a wall and uttering a silent curse as he straightened.

When he reached the kitchen, he watched with amusement as George rummaged through the cupboards, apparently not finding a breakfast option they liked. They leaned against the doorway and observed as apples, suspicious soup, and even salmon were tossed back into storage with disgust or disinterest. After watching mutton getting tossed too, he considered a solution. "We can always bake another pumpkin pie if you want?" George nearly jumped out of his skin when Dream, voice rough with sleep, finally spoke up. Patches had abandoned them moments earlier, and other than wooden boards creaking under their heels, the kitchen was silent, and they thought they were alone. Dream's guest whipped around to peer at him, eyes dashing across his face and mask. His surprise gradually wore off, and a snort escaped George when he took in his house mate's appearance.

"Uh... Pfft- I mean, G-Good morning!" George tripped over his words, trying hard to ignore laughter bubbling in him. A moment of silence came across the two as Dream scanned his face with intense scrutiny, and George fought away a smirk. Dream saw through the ruse.

"...Alright, fess up, you draw on my mask, or face, or something?" George snorted at the notion, but Dream still wiped a hand over his disguise and bit of face the plastic didn't cover, just to make sure. There wasn't any ink smeared on his hand, and therefore, he likely had a minimal amount of dicks drawn on him. It only forced his confusion to grow. He arched his eyebrows angrily and pretended to be mad about his predicament of not knowing, but his chuckle gave him away. "Ugh, what is it?!"

"Dream, do you ever look in a mirror?" George snickered, waving him over. "Here, there's a water bucket over here if you wanna see the disaster on your head." The taller man scoffed, of course, but jogged over to look at his reflection.

All of his golden locks were poofy and barely resembled what he considered his typical form. Multiple strands hung over his face, if not outright defying gravity from where they dangled in the air, horrendously out of place. He could see George laughing in the background of his reflection, and rolled his eyes as he dipped his hand into the bucket and dissolved the unflattering image into ripples. He promptly removed his hand and flung water on his shocked guest.

"Stop! Hey! I was just trying to help!" George shrieked as he put his hands up for defense and back stepped out of range. It was Dream's turn to snicker at the wholly expected reaction, though he did choose to fix his hair. A little bit.

George watched as his host ran his hands through his hair and flattened unruly locks with water, though he was doing an admittedly poor job. Light from the nearby window illuminated his outline with a golden hue, making him stand out in a detail George couldn't see in the dim light provided last night. His messy, stringy hair seemed to glow in the generous light, but that wasn't everything. He could see things he didn't notice before. Like the worn scratches and grooves ripped into his mask like old scars. Or, the shine of his somewhat crooked, off-white teeth, or his defined jawline-

He was caught staring when Dream spared him a questioning glance, and he scoffed as he quickly

averted his gaze. He turned his attention to the damage Dream caused. The front of his shirt was still stained with the small droplets flung on him, and it would take time to dry. He did grab the hem of his shirt and tried to flap it dry, though. It didn't work very well.

After giving up, he leaned against the counter. A good-natured huff left him as he crossed his arms. "Does your hair always look like that in the morning?" The tall man's hands stopped moving after being confronted with the question, though he wasn't given time to think too deeply about it before he heard George starting to crack up. "Oh my god, you never look, do you? You probably look like a clown every morning!"

Much more water was flung this time, and George failed miserably at sidestepping the danger, what with screaming taking a lot of effort already. Dream grinned and watched as Dream wiped the moisture from his smeared lens, and tried desperately to rub away the huge wet spot on the front of his blue shirt. "I'll toss the entire bucket next time," He threatened, and George feigned a fake laugh with an annoyed look. "Anyways, I'll cook," Dream yawned, strolling outside to grab some wood while George silently mimicked his words to mock him.

With the last quips and joking threats out of the way, the duo fell into a pattern. It was a very clumsy, shitty pattern, but a pattern. George couldn't stand to wait around doing nothing as Dream had expected, so they decided to try and wash some of the dishes from last night while his host cooked. Dream quirked an eyebrow, but ultimately shrugged, and pushed up his hoodie's sleeves as he fired up the furnace. He certainly didn't want to scrub nasty bowls, and he wasn't going to stop George if they wanted to help out.

The kitchen, though lovely, was obviously the most cramped part of the house. A small corner with a kitchen island packed into it was all it was, really, leaving the nearby living room much more room. Dream didn't actually consider having a kitchen until the last minute, and his procrastination and forgetfulness resulted in the odd layout. It also resulted in him nearly knocking George over every time he tried to get by him to the fridge or cupboards. At first, his new friend seemed to recognize it as a simple mistake and accepted getting shoved into the cauldron he was washing in. At first. On the fourth shove in which Dream realized he forgot the milk (again), an elbow promptly stabbed him in the side. George didn't get shoved into the cauldron anymore.

The house seemed briefly peaceful, a complete contrast to last night.

Instead of squeaky yelling and chattering teeth, the sound of splashing water, and wood rubbing against cloth prevailed. George cleaned the dishes and spoons they ate with as best he could, content with the near-peaceful silence that allowed him to efficiently complete his work.

And, though Dream wore an unpredictable, savage expression under his mask last night, you wouldn't be able to tell by the dopey smile and cheerful humming he partook in today. Flour dusted the side of his face, and his hair was a hot mess, but his expression seemed to almost imitate the smiley on his mask. The few times George looked up and over, he couldn't help but feel warm inside when he saw Dream's peaceful, lazy smile.

Dish washing wasn't hard, and Dream was still at work whenever George finished and set everything up. Instead of leaving, though, he secured his hands on the granite island and hopped up as he watched what the self-taught cook was up to.

The pumpkin pie was tossed into the oven once Dream was satisfied enough with the pre-cooked appearance. He stood up and stretched once done, his flexible joints sounding like pop rocks as he cracked his knuckles and popped both shoulders. George pretended like he didn't shiver at the disgusting noises.

Dream hopped up onto the counter with him soon after. They swung their legs in sync for a few minutes, before Dream brought his knee up to rest his arm on. He turned to George, a smile still on his lips.

"Hey." He said.

"Hey?" George's attention was piqued at the start of a conversation, and he silently shuffled his fingers as he waited for them to continue.

"Hm... Okay. I'm thinking of a number between one and one hundred. High or low?"

George paused, his eyes fixated on the granite counter as he considered it. "...High." He went back to fidgeting.

"Good job. Okay, then, I'm thinkin' of a number between fifty and one hundred. High or low?" His chin rested on his propped up arm as he waited for George's response.

"High. Where are you going with this?" George asked quietly, watching the oven door intently. They were both clearly bored, but even George didn't think they would stoop this low. Regardless, he wanted to know how far this would go.

"Yup. Alright, this one's for all the marbles. I'm thinking of a number between seventy-five and one hundred. What's the number?"

George took a lot longer this time, though, Dream expected this. He had a 4% chance of getting the number correct, and those weren't good odds. Dream was hoping they would get it right. Or, at least getting infuriatingly close enough that he could make fun of them. There was an 8% chance of that, too.

"Eighty sev-"

"NOPE!" Dream shouted, his laughter booming as George grumbled and hopped off the counter to storm off to the next room. Dream's wheezing only got worse as George flipped him off from the safety of the couch.

"Ugh, that was luck of the draw! I didn't have a chance!" He complained, hands erratically motioning his anger. His shrieking and arguing seemed to make the joke funnier.

"Actually, you had a four percen-"

"Oh, screw you!"

The pie took several more minutes to finish, which thankfully gave Dream the time to come off his laughter-filled high, and George space to not be as peeved at his misfortunes. He was still irritated, though.

Once they had both hopped into actual chairs with their respective slices and milk glasses set out, George relished in the temporary sense of homeliness being here seemed to bring. George, in lieu of exploration, never bothered with the hassle of a home. He set up camps, yes, but never a place he could call 'home.' Steak over a campfire didn't feel half as welcoming as a cup of milk and a slice of pumpkin pie. A rough seat of stone and dirt didn't compare to a wooden stool and a tabletop to eat off of. Though Dream's eyes seemed mostly to wander over the living room and out the home's windows while they ate, George knew he appreciated having someone else to dine with, for once.

The deep, reflective thoughts had passed, though, and he was halfway through shoving his entire slice in his mouth when Dream cleared his throat, clearly holding back laughter as he started talking. George politely stopped deep throating his meal. "So, what do you want to do today?" He asked simply. It wasn't exactly a hard question, considering there was plenty to do. George just wasn't sure which one would be a good pick. He went quiet and wasn't answering as he blanked out, looking at the granite countertop, so Dream added a suggestion.

"We could go mining together," He said, rolling his hand as he looked at the ceiling and pondered. "Go on a food run, set up a farm," He continued, as George reacted at each suggestion. He was definitely still listening, so Dream kept offering options.

"...Hell, I could spare a day sitting around and doing nothing if you want," But George waved his hand dismissively before he even finished the thought. It prompted the quieter of the two to finally speak up, though.

"No, that's a bit boring, I'd rather help you do something," George responded, uncrossing his legs from under the table and sitting up straight again as he looked up at Dream. "You mentioned mining? We could try that." Dream smiled at his decision, giving a small nod before he slid out of his chair and stood. Patches came to rub against his legs briefly, before darting off to who-knows-where for the day.

"Hell yeah. We're running low on iron and coal, all the works. We'll pack up, be ready by noon, spend a day or two out. Cool?" He asked, having run over the basic plan.

"Cool," George answered, scooting his chair back and collecting his trash and dishes as Dream's smile returned. There was a moment of awkwardness, as the conversation had finished prematurely, and run face-first into a wall. It was definitely awkward, but not unpleasant, considering they were both put in a good mood by the plans they had made.

"Cool," Dream repeated. "Well, I'm uh, gonna go pack my stuff-"

"-Oh, um, yeah-" George murmured with a chuckle.

"I'll get the picks and stuff, could you carry our food, wood, crafting table, and a furnace?" Dream asked, glancing back at him before he left for the backroom. George quickly shook his head, and his friend beamed. "See you soon," He hastily finished the conversation, walking back to what George suggested was a storage room.

A glance was spared at a clock, and the blue-shirted miner realized how close to noon it was. His worn and partially torn bag was roughly grabbed as they rushed to shove everything into it. He cleared a large portion of their food into the bag, including salmon, steak, and even a pork chop or two. Though he often reminded himself this was likely over packing, George wanted to make sure he was packing enough for their meals. Wood, already chopped and neatly piled outside, was simple enough to grab. Furnaces and Crafting tables weren't a big deal. They weren't nearly as large or heavy whenever they were put in his bag, oddly enough. It always weirded him out that carrying one in his hands was challenging, yet... George didn't know where the thought was going, so he dismissed it.

His stuff seemed mostly packed, and he was trying to recall anything else. George had shoved his old bedroll, and the blankets Dream had lent him last night in with his stuff last moment, but he couldn't think of anything else he needed. He was sitting on the couch, running his hand over the soft, velvet cushions. He jolted and dug his nails into the cotton when he heard his name being shouted from the other room.

"George! C' mere, I got your armor and tools! We gotta go!" The shouting was distant, but harsh and surprising enough to bring him to reality.

"Coming!" He answered, already halfway off the couch and jogging to the back room. The bag was nearly left behind, but George reached back and clutched it last second. He spotted Dream sitting on the ground, trying to shove his foot into a boot when he made it to the doorway. Dream's head snapped up at his presence, a golden lock falling out of place and covering one of the masks' drawn eyes. They were clearly eager to get going, based off their rushed shoving on of their armor.

"Hey. You're, uh- I took your armor in from last night, but it looked kind of damaged." Dream explained casually, motioning over to a newish looking pair hung lazily on an armor stand. They got the notion, and Dream trailed off as he focused on forcing a second shoe on as his friend examined the armor given to them. It was slightly less bulky and ever-so-slightly more revealing than George's old set. Picking up the helmet and lightly tossing it up a few times, he could tell it was definitely lighter.

"I know, I know, I'm the best armor smith you've ever seen." George glanced in his general direction, but he didn't need to look to know there was a shit-eating smirk on his friend's face. He scoffed. Dream was predictable, except when he wasn't.

"But," they continued, "I think it'd be a lot better to wear it than to stare at it." George rolled his eyes, but took the advice and slipped the shoes off the stand.

George was unsurprisingly still dressing by the time Dream had finished. For the first few minutes, Dream stood around pacing and scuffing his boots on the ground, but it became evident his companion was struggling more than a child with the bindings, so he came over to help them adjust it. It seemed to annoy them more when Dream was able to tighten and secure the straps on his leggings in seconds, compared to his 2-3 minute struggles with the same devices. Their chest plate was finally secured, and Dream unceremoniously slapped his friend's helmet on his head.

Extra food had been set out for Patches. Dream had manually turned off all his lights. George helped him double-check the fences surrounding his mushroom farm, and the door to it was tied shut with rope to deter anything large enough to stomp the fungus. Valuables were locked up, multiple checklists ran down- Dream eventually pointed out they were stalling, and it was agreed on it was time to leave.

George ran ahead while Dream locked the door behind them. Truth be told- He was queasy about this entire thing. After all, this could be an elaborate plan to kill him. He didn't know.

Even if it wasn't, mines were undoubtedly dangerous places. Skeletons were hard to hit and had a questionably precise aim when they put their skulls to it. Creepers were silent killers. Hell, even zombies were dangerous in large numbers or with tools.

He felt Dream shove him playfully, so he took revenge. A shoulder bumped into Dream's own and caused their armor to protest with loud, resounding clanks. He got elbowed in the side with a chuckle before they let it go with grins on their faces, and mischief in their hidden eyes.

The duo started walking soon after. Dream led the way, and George walked alongside him. At some point that morning, Dream explained he stripped most caves nearby, so they would have to travel a far bit to find much of anything. George didn't mind.

With that, the two figures set out for a day of exploration and mining. The house stood silent in the middle of the woodland clearing as they began their trek off into the distance. Once, one of them had looked back, but it was brief. The green hoodie and blue shirt became nothing more than

distant colors, and soon, they had disappeared into the green of the wilderness entirely.

Chapter End Notes

:)

also, dont forget the lil detail i hid in the tags. expect angst next chapter, ily all! >:)))

Chapter 5

Chapter Summary

Dream and George find a cave. The adventure begins...

Chapter Notes

hey hey! back atcha a month later with some sweet, sweet content. hope you enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Dream knew they would have to travel a reasonable distance, but this was ridiculous.

He and George had been walking for close to a week now. Though they started the week profoundly optimistic and confident of their pathfinding abilities... Neither was sure now. Finding a viable cave had proven somewhat tricky.

A small object sat in the palm of his hand now, and he watched it intently as the cold metal gave a tingly sensation to his skin. The compass pointed in the direction he faced, away from the warm crackle of the fire lapping at his back. He heard another log get tossed into their small pit. The red needle was facing home and would lead them there whenever it was time to return. For now, the thrill of adventure still had Dream hooked, and George was used to this lifestyle anyways. Though today was a disappointment, tomorrow would be a banger.

Dream turned away from the field he was facing and walked back towards the fire. A few trees were downed and dragged here, and they used them both as seats and firewood supplies. The rough bark dug into his hands and through his jeans as he sat down on their makeshift furniture. George glanced up at his return. He was sitting on his haunches and stoking the fire with a twig, but the shorter man quickly tossed the stick in and sat back onto the log behind him.

"So," George asked him. "Are we planning on doing shifts again tonight?"

"Yeah, I figured that was the plan. Whoever's going second should sleep soon, so we both get some good shut-eye." Dream picked up a stick as he discussed it, shoving it into the flames to watch it kindle and burn with a bored sort of disinterest. George responded in a low hum from across the fire, but otherwise, they both sat in silence for a few moments.

Their day was straightforward and anti-climatic. They crossed a spruce forest, a small birch, and dozens of fields and forests. Not to mention the time they spent wading through rivers. So far, most of the caves the world had to offer were either previously lit up by Dream, or too shallow to be worth their time. Once they reached the shoreline of a vast ocean late in the day, they stopped and discussed their decision.

"We could get headway into the ocean," he remembered George suggesting. "You know, get a decent boat built, sleep out in open seas away from danger." His armor and glasses glistened with a sharp, blinding light, and Dream had to squint to look at him. The glare faded out and softened later as the sun disappeared behind clouds. Still, he remembered it was a distinct nuisance during the talk.

"No offense, but... You smell like ass, sweat, and dirt. I'm not sleeping in a boat with you." Dream replied, a smirk hiding on his lips. George seemed confused at first, but the corners of his eyes quickly crinkled at the quip as ardent offense showed in his eyes. George's straight face slipped into a growing smile, and soon to chuckles that promptly spiraled out of his control. George was struggling to inform him he was 'an asshole' and 'smelled way worse' through his gasps and loud laughter. Still, Dream was smugly triumphantly as their giggles subsided, and his reward came as a playful shove. Sleeping at sea was out of the question at that point, so they opted to set up a camp while light was still out.

Their setup was relatively simple, really. George still had a small, cotton tent cover from his previous adventures before Dream, so they staked a few long sticks in the ground and had a small tent to sleep in. One edge was torn, there was a small hole in one side, and it was only made for one person- but it would do. Unless it rained, none of those things would be problems anyways, George had mentioned early on while brushing off Dream's concerns. After setting up the tent, Dream assured him he had lumberjack duties covered, and George started a fire with their already packed supply of firewood while he ran off into the woods.

The shock on George's face to see him struggling, but generally succeeding, at wrangling a large tree out from the woods was absolutely worth the splinters and back pain he received. The raised eyebrows and dropped jaw put on display made a feeling of warmth and pride explode in his chest. Even if the look was quickly wiped off, and George dropped everything and ran full speed towards him with annoyance echoing in his shouts. Even if his friend cussed him out and scolded him like he was five, Dream was still proud of himself. He'd come a long way from the time he'd passed out from punching trees down on his first day.

Well, that, and he had an axe now. But that's irrelevant to the point.

A campfire, a tent, and the two log seats they made was the current composition of their camp. A

campfire, tent, and two handmade log seats made up the current composition of their camp. George had started on a small, unfinished boat nearby, and he tasked both Dream and him to work on it during shifts. It was much later in the day now, and the sky was beginning to turn to a darker blue. Across the sea, they could see the sun starting to set, just barely. Above, stars shined faintly for anyone who would squint close enough to discover the hidden gems spanning out above them. The fire was starting to make Dream's eyes burn with the smoke it produced, and his entire face felt toasty. It was an uncomfortable contrast to the cold nipping at his back.

He looked up from the fire when he heard George yawn and sit up. He was stretching, an odd expression scrunched on his face as their arm was held high over his head, and one leg splayed at a unique angle. Eventually, the tired traveler slouched again and noticed Dream looking at them.

"I'll take the first watch," Dream offered, and George did little more than nod. Anyone with eyes could tell they were tired, and even the small smile they spared the masked man seemed strained. "Kay."

George got up from their seat at the fire after a few more minutes with a disgruntled noise, and Dream averted his gaze as he started pulling off his armor at the camp's edge. Each piece landed with a clank, clang, or thud, making Dream hope the new gear didn't retain any scratches from the treatment. He was surprised to see George slink back moments later, apparently deciding to sleep in his clothes instead of changing to something else. Dream didn't blame him.

He thought the sleepy adventurer was going to pass out with his glasses on. After stepping over Dream's pack and turning away as he settled down on the tent's far side, though, he saw him hesitate. His digits felt over the scarred edge of the white frames. Eventually, he pulled them off and placed it on Dream's pillow behind him. George yawned, fell into his pillow, and began to voice his final goodnights. He pulled a blanket over his head and didn't look back at his masked companion again as his consciousness drifted. Dream understood.

"Well, uh, thank you... I'll take my shift at midnight, cook for us tomorrow. Make sure I don't wake up with an arrow in my ass, y' know?... I can't wait to get going tomorrow. You smell worse than rotten eggs by the way, and I hope the boat ride's short..." he murmured nearly incomprehensibly into his pillow, just loud enough to be heard. Dream snickered as he trailed off, but generally understood most of what George said.

"Will do."

The night watch was unsurprisingly dull. It mostly consisted of stoking the fire, working on their boat, and occasionally slaying the odd zombie that walked into their camp. His knife scraped against the hardwood of the boat's exterior as Dream worked on top of their crafting table. A sudden jolt of panic shook him when his thumb got too close to the wood, and the red hot pain of a

splinter slid right into the pad of his thumb. He cursed quietly and prayed it wouldn't wake his companion up. That was enough boat-making for tonight.

After shoving his sleeves down and putting his knife up, Dream sighed and got up. It was only an hour or so until midnight if the moon was telling the truth. Their camp had come undone a lot more since yesterday morning. Bodies littered the nearby ground, including one of a skeleton. The sickly, infected blood of one of the zombies leaked and bubbled from the wounds Dream slashed and stabbed into them. All of them had extreme lacerations in their chests, multiple were laying with their limbs detached, and one was missing its head. It made him sick to look at anything but the severely cracked bones of the skeleton, even if he was the one who left them like that.

George sat peacefully in his bedrolls, right next to Dream's. He was still turned away from him, but he had shifted multiple times, to the point of pulling the covers over his head in a hood. It was surprising he could still breathe. His hair was undoubtedly going to be a rat's nest when it came time to wake him up, and Dream couldn't wait to make fun of him for it.

A few more logs got lugged into the fire, which crackled happily and lapped at the extra fuel. Dream looked over to George again, letting himself stare a few minutes. Most of their blankets had been tossed off, and they had curled up and shivered. Dream had made a valiant effort to cover him up but gave up after the fourth time George kicked the blanket off. The fire was still going, so he was sure George couldn't be that cold.

Dream's chin rested in their palm as they peered at their friend from across the flames. The masked man couldn't really understand why he had been so scared of *him* at first. His fears of being murdered in his sleep were lessened significantly over the last week, though the two's small talks and travels. He'd learned a lot about the stranger in that time.

George was colorblind. They liked blue. They'd been traveling for roughly a year or so and woke up precisely as Dream did. They weren't serious about disliking Dream's mushroom soup. They had a cute laugh. They were left-handed. They liked staying up and looking at the stars on days where he could find a safer campsite. They were all small, basic things, but it was nice knowing something about them, and Dream could go on and on.

Dream told them about the village and his occasional explorations. About how he loved to cook and build, and everything he could think of about his cat, Patches. That his favorite color was green. He talked about his attempts to learn whatever bullshit language the villagers opted to use and how he liked to write stuff in their native. He even talked about how he loved spending time at the beaches when he could afford a day away from responsibilities, to swim and sun most the day. He promised to take George.

It was near midnight now, and Dream's eyes stung with a lack of sleep. He stood to his feet and did

a small, last lap around the campsite. It was completely clear.

It took him only a few seconds to shuffle out of his armor, and he made sure to place the dull, worn iron in a neat pile far enough from George's new set. Dream really couldn't see how George managed to sleep in the sweaty, dirty, bulky clothes he wore all day, since he personally had to swap his hoodie and pants out for a tank and shorts if he wanted to get an ounce of sleep. It might have been cold out, but Dream couldn't stand the thought of sleeping in his sweat and grime.

Dream lowered himself down onto the ground where his bedding was and relaxed for a few minutes sitting next to George. The reflection of fire caught his eye in black lenses nearby, and he picked George's glasses off his pillow. The white frame was slightly scratched, and one arm was somewhat bent, but the lenses were practically undamaged. Dream traced a finger over a sharp shard of plastic on the side, but his eyes darted to his friend. He could see the blankets gently rise and fall as they slept soundly and soundlessly. Dream really didn't want to wake him, but it was a necessary evil. One hand gripped the frame, and the other gave a few quick pats to his friend's shoulder. He turned his head away when he heard a groan. George's glasses were held out for him.

"Morning. Wake me up in six hours, and we'll start early. You better be a good cook." Dream smiled as the glasses were pulled from his hand, and George murmured something unintelligible.

By the time George had fixed his armor and returned to their main camp, Dream had fallen asleep. His heart skipped a beat when he saw Dream had curled up in the still-warm spot they left, though George couldn't actually see him under all the blankets he chose to pile on top of him. The spot Dream was designated was empty, aside from one thing. Taking the spot of his glasses, George picked up a worn, white mask sitting on his friend's unused pillow.

An open flame crackled next to George's ear, and he cleared his throat. The vast cave his eyes scanned and looked out on was danger-filled, but nonetheless a resource-rich opening. Even without much light and glasses on, he could spot the cave's perks. A large cavern right near the surface gave them access to a ravine, a double ravine, a mineshaft, and several drops directly into lava. This was the precise type of cave they had been looking for for a week now, dropped at their feet. They were lucky Dream argued long enough to stop him from rowing right past it, though he wouldn't admit his error.

They knew this would likely be a several week long endeavor if they planned to fully explore and excavate the cavern, so their goal was nowhere near that. George hasn't talked out the specifics yet, but he saw his companion pull a map from the front pocket of his hoodie and start marking something. He assumed this visit wouldn't be their last. As he stared off into the abyss of

opportunities, George didn't notice immediately that Dream wasn't beside him anymore, but instead, surveying a nearby wall. The greyish stone wall wasn't anything special. It was close enough to see the light of day, yet far away enough from the ledge where the gorge began to be safe. Dream's leather bag thudded on the ground near his shoe, and George could see the glint of the pick retrieved. He knew what was going to be suggested before Dream even opened his mouth.

"We should set up camp. C'mon, help me dig out this wall." George obliged and reached behind him to grab the pick strapped to the back of his old pack.

Mining wasn't hard work. It was actually the furthest thing from it- but it is time-consuming and repetitive. George was sweaty and gulping down the cave's thick, musty air by the time they had finished. Dream quietly wiped the sweat from under his mask as their worn picks receded yet again to observe their progress.

It was a homely little hole, and George could see it being big enough to house them as a temporary base. Especially if it meant they were done. Dream stepped back and looked over their work with a fresh, intensely critical stare. The derpy dots marked on the white face were fun to imagine as Dream's real eyes, and George watched, amused, as they raked through the granite and stone interior their work had completed. His friend finally relented, took a sharp inhale, and nodded as he let a huff of satisfaction. The homely little den seemed to meet Dream's apparently high standards. Thankfully, George didn't have any standards.

They were mostly quiet while they moved their stuff in, with Dream focused on aligning his bed with the wall, and George working to straighten his sheets up a bit neater. Their bedrolls sat in a small corner, spaced out from each other to suit the shorter resident's preferences. While George worked on folding and settling the sheets of his bed, the blond man's green sleeves were yanked up and folded to his elbows. They rubbed their hands feverishly as if preparing to lift something heavy; after all, they were. Dream proceeded to take on the task of placing and moving the furnaces, tables, and chests from George's pack.

Disgruntled grunts and the sound of wood and stone scraping the floor were all he could hear of Dream's work as he turned his attention and made up the lifters' bedroll as well, so he assumed it was going poorly. At least it was going, though. The noises stopped, finally, and George stood up from the subpar but passable wrinkled blankets. He dug a pair of torches into the back wall as a final touch and walked out to where Dream stood observing.

When he stepped back to the doorway to look over what they were expected to live in for the next week or so, he cringed; it was bare-bones, and even George's camp put it to shame in terms of looks. But, it was functional, and it would do.

He heard some shuffling beside him, then, with a heavy sigh, an arm got tossed around his

shoulder. He tensed, and immediately flashed a confused glance at Dream. His companion was calmly admiring their decor work, as pitiful as it stood, and paid little attention to him past the gesture. George quickly dropped the notion that the weight on his shoulders was something to be worried or think too hard about, and his gaze turned off of him. George supposed Dream was just touchier than he thought.

"George?"

"Yeah?" he asked.

Dream had turned to look at him after he'd finished analyzing their tiny camp, and George looked back. Dream was closer than he would have liked, and he could see a smirk dancing on his lips as if he was ready to say something. George stumbled as Dream suddenly escorted them away from the entrance and the light of day, back to the high edge where daylight died, and the dark chasms below dropped off and began. George was confused about why they were here, but since Dream seemed to want him to look at something here, his eyes darted around. He quickly noticed he was able to catch more details than earlier, with the time of day changed and more light flowing into the cavern. The rock face desperately reached to catch glimpses of sunlight, their efforts reflecting in the crystal-like shimmers in the stone, and the glint of running water in the darkness. Granite's lovely reddish color reflected beautifully as a welcomed accent on the landscape. Even diorite, the birdshit of stone, didn't look so bad in the small patches it appeared. Below in the lower levels of the abyss where sunshine never reached, lava granted a gentle glow. In some spots, even remnants of life grew- A mushroom, a vine, or even a flower, made a rare appearance to tarnish the darkness's loneliness with the sweetness of life. They stood for a while to take the freshly revealed details in, but the moment eventually faded. Dream's free arm made a stupidly dramatic sweeping gesture out towards the scenery that George couldn't help but laugh at. Dream boomed out a message that echoed over the walls of the alluding cave. "This place is fucking dope."

"Mhm," George murmured in a sarcastic tone, "I really didn't notice." The soft punch to his shoulder didn't surprise him much, and neither did the shove as Dream delivered as his hold on George was relinquished. An unhealthy wheeze rose in Dream's throat among the chuckles, and George realized too late as he fixed his shirt that the laughter was contagious.

"Oh my god, you're such a smartass," Dream finally snapped back, his smile ever-present. In a slightly more serious tone, he resumed what he planned to say, glancing over the edge as he spoke. His smile seemed to twitch up as he spotted something he liked down there, but George didn't comment on it. He figured he'd see it soon enough. "Alright, so I think we should explore. It's still, what, midday? There's plenty of time." George's face was unreadable at first, but he slowly nodded. "Yeah, better late than never," He added, and Dream grinned at him, and leaned forward to peek over the edge one last time.

George wasn't quite sure what he expected, but it certainly wasn't for Dream to suddenly grab his

hand in a death hold. Eyes darted up for some explanation in the masked face, but he swore he felt his blood run cold when his worry was met by a reckless, suicidal smile. He didn't know yet if what Dream had planned would kill them both, or be a stroke of pure genius. George wasn't expecting to like either outcome.

"Ready?" Dream asked, giddiness barely contained in his voice. The lunatic's stiff, cold, and boney hand crushed his carpals, but the confusion smearing George's face masked any potential winces of pain. His eyebrows knit, and his mouth barely had the time to mouth a small 'what,' before Dream was suddenly flung himself off the edge, and yanking George with him.

"DREAM!" He felt his lungs scream out as panic slammed his heart and forced adrenaline through his veins, but it was too late. His feet skidded off the edge, and he was falling face-first into a pit of darkness he couldn't see. Dream was cackling hysterically, not letting up the iron grip on his hand as they fell to their inevitable deaths. George faltered in the air, flipping over and looking up at the last glimpses of light from the outside world, which was only becoming further away. As air breezed through his hair and lashed at the back of his neck, he recalled similar endings. He disliked painful endings. And falling to your death is one of the worst. He braced and tried to lean his head far enough back that his skull would shatter on impact. At least that would spare him most of the pain.

Hitting water was the last thing he expected, but the air was knocked from his lungs, and he couldn't deny the taste of dirty water on his tongue. He almost tried to take a breath, though he managed to stop himself before flooding his lungs. His eyes were shut tight, and he felt weightless as he slowly began to thrash upwards. At some point, he became vaguely aware that he could still feel Dream's hand holding his. The grip softened into a firm, but comfortable hold. They were trying to pull him up.

When George emerged at the surface, his large, gasping breaths were met by a smug chuckle. By the time he'd wiped his eyes and opened them, Dream had already slithered out of the small pool of water and sat on the side, waiting patiently for George. A nearby torch impaled the stone, and George concluded Dream must have set one down after getting out. George could only see the rough orangeish outline of his features, coated in a new, dripping seal of water. Truthfully, the fighter looked much scarier in this light, where the deep scars of his mask complimented the dead stare the smile seemed to emanate. Thankfully, Dream's real smile hid right under the mask's edge in a calm, neutral expression. It did leagues towards warding off the murderous undertones of the scene.

He pulled himself to the surface and sat next to his friend. Neither looked at each other, though Dream could only wince and chuckle weakly to himself when a fist slammed into his shoulder, as expected. He peered over to his friend, surprised that his expression was more resentful than anything. His eyebrows were arched, and his nose was scrunched, and his posture was rigid, though Dream could see him shaking ever so slightly. When his glance meandered down, he noticed one of George's hands gripping the pool's edge. What was supposed to be a fun joke felt a lot meaner than intended.

"I'm sorry." He offered. It was simple and straightforward, and Dream didn't know what to say otherwise. George didn't respond, so he went quiet. Dream watched silently as George's feet swung over the edge of the pool, skirting the top layer of the water and sending ripples through the small pond. He readjusted his jaw, somewhat disappointed in himself, and considered how he could mend the jagged tear he ripped in George's trust.

When a sudden urge hit him, Dream trusted his intuition and didn't think twice to reach over and lay his hand over the digits still roughly clawing into the stone. When his friend jolted, he briefly thought he'd messed up, but he felt the hand under his slack. When he dared venture far enough to slide and lock their fingers together, Dream didn't find resistance. It stayed that way for a few minutes, with George staring off with an odd, confusing stare, and Dream looking down into the lake with the beginnings of a smile. Regardless of how subtle gestures felt, the silence wasn't doing either of them good. Dream cleared his voice and tried an apology again. "I'm sorry about the w-"

"-It's okay," the lighter voice interrupted him, "No, it's fine, really. It just scared me."

Dream nodded.

"Okay."

The caverns around them were littered with monsters and beasts of every size and variety. Dream didn't need to see it to recognize the groans and cries in the distance as a zombie hoard, or the clanking and rattling bones of a sniper. Creepers were too silent for any sign of them to be audible. Still, he knew regardless, any viable mines were infested with them. Dream had mostly dried off, and he reasoned George's shirt would dry by the lava anyways. They had limited time left to loiter around like this before something found them unprepared.

His hand slipped out of his friend's loose grasp, and he stood. George caught on and took the hand offered to him as he stood. Dream smiled at him, picking up the torch from the ground nearby.

"Alright, you big baby, let's go." Dream was expecting the second punch in his sore arm, though his stomach pitted out when only silence followed. Out of the corner of his eye, he scanned over his friend's face for signs of distress, and he sighed. Dream noted this time, George was smiling.

Chapter End Notes

aaand that's a wrap! sorry for the lack of angst this chapter. chapter five was originally 10k words, but i decided to split it into two chapters instead to even stuff out. even though six is finished, gonna wait a few days till i post it. i took heavy inspiration from a comment on my last chapter, so we'll see how this goes :)

have fun!

Chapter 6

Chapter Summary

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Chapter Notes

>:)

[GRAPHIC CONTENT THIS CHAPTER!!!
SKIP TO THE ENDNOTE FOR A FULL LIST OF TRIGGER WARNINGS.
YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED.]

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"Look out!"

An arrow whizzed by his head, barely dodged after George's swift warning. The pick he was holding was promptly dropped to the ground with a troubled groan, and his sword was unsheathed to replace it. The monsters were beginning to mob them on all sides again, and though he had only unearthed a few chunks of coal from this area, the elephant in the room couldn't be ignored anymore.

Dream already had his sword slicing through the skeleton's cartilage before they could load a second arrow. He heard a shriek from behind him and turned on his heel to help with the spider that knocked George over and began to maul him.

His hair was starting to stick to the skin under his mask, and his breaths were labored. Part of his hoodie sleeve was torn beneath his armor set, and an arrow wound from earlier still plagued his thigh with a burning pain that seemed to worsen with each step. This is the most injured he's been in a while.

George wasn't doing much better. He frantically shoved and fought the spider on top of him, his fight or flight reaction wiping all other thoughts from his head. His glasses were covered in the beast's sickly venom, and one of the taloned legs was dug into his thigh. It may have been missing an eye and set on the verge of death, but it tried to force its way past the firm hand holding it away from George's neck. The sound of lava bubbled near his hair, and George swore he could feel the

singe of the molten rock as he struggled with the arachnid. A blade stabbed through the insect and reemerged next to George's palm, though he had little time to yell at Dream for the close call. He was yanked on his feet and running after the much more agile Dream within the minute.

Arrows whizzed. Angry mobs of beasts roared with anger and want as they chased them, and more than one creeper had exploded in George's ear like rockets, leaving a ringing to slowly drive him insane. His primary focus was the green hoodie in front of him. His friend dashed through the caves without looking back with a confidence George thought no one had. He'd jumped over multiple lava pools and barely caught the edge numerous times, though he always took care to pave a more reasonable path for George. Skeletons couldn't aim at his blurred figure, and zombies couldn't get close enough. Most creepers didn't even have the time to begin denotation. It filled George with a sense of awe as he watched, following along blindly as Dream frantically ran to find where they came. George admired him for that.

Apparently, too blindly. With little warning, he saw the ground rush at his face and didn't get the time to scream. Everything snapped to black.

...Admired him...

George opened his eyes, looking around the dim, hot room he struggled to breathe in. The cavern was red, dark, and the edges of his vision were blurred and blackened. Someone in a white shirt blocked his vision, and George heard himself shouting with a thundering heart rate at them and another, distant figure. He could feel his voice was scratchy from yelling, and the sword in his hand felt as heavy as lead. There was severe pain in his chest, but he knew somehow that his wound wasn't that deep.

After that, time seemed to loop. He was running for ages, the two figures running with him. They weren't important to him right now, though. There was someone, something, that he- well, they-needed to find, and fast. His feet might have burned, but his passion for the hunt burned brighter.

On the fourth flight of stairs up, the world opened up from the tight, dark space where his vision was blocked by locks of black hair and a sweaty white shirt. He ran straight into a bright landscape with searing light that hurt his eyes to stare at, even with his shades. Something felt wrong about the blank, white canvas, like it was blocking out something more significant. Yet he didn't worry about it. The runner was about to escape.

He shoved past the other hunters, running to the front of the line with his sword bared-

Dream stood at the edge. George felt his entire consciousness reel back from shock, yet his body refused. The scene played out, like from a movie he could feel. The rough cowhide that made a wrapped handle on his diamond sword was dug into by his nails, and a grimace of annoyance paired with a squinted glare dashed his face. George felt disconnected from the world as he watched Dream.

His blonde hair was greasy and unkempt, but as wrong alone was for him, that seemed to be the least of Dream's problems. The armor he wore was scarred and bloody, and deep slashes were torn into his lean, now frail-looking body. Regardless, a smirk wavered at the edge of his lips, half unsure of his next move. Blood flooded from his wounds as he gracefully darted away from them, and George could feel the annoyance scrunched in his face. Like this was a regular, minor inconvenience. Like anything happening was normal.

Dream was to the edge of the white, blinding light now, and George darted to him with feet he no longer controlled. He didn't want this. He tried to shut whatever weird daydream this was off, and pretend his sword wasn't ready to slice down into his friend.

Without warning, Dream jumped off the edge of the cliff.

*"He's jumping!" He felt himself screech, with disbelief as well as relief. One of his companions was charging too, and he heard them skid nearby and fall in with screams and angry cries. He paid no attention. George's eyes were locked on Dream because strangely, **he wasn't dead yet**. His bag was slung off his back, and he fumbled with an item in his hand, but he'd reached the burning light under him too soon. Dream was starting to dissolve into nothing but smoke and the pungent smell of charred flesh- But, the flask in his hands met his mouth, and though his head sunk below the blinding light, George knew. Dream was alive.*

Someone was yelling near him, and he was providing some sort of discourse back. However, his mind strayed, and he stared intently into the pool of sizzling brightness without caring about the pain in his eyes. Dream was undoubtedly insane- But it was something to be respected. A smile pulled itself onto his lips as the bright, seething light overtook everything in a flash that returned him to darkness. For George, though, the insane, stupid confidence and bravery was to be more than respected. It was something worth admiring.

The third jolt of pain in his arm woke him up. George found himself in an odd position, head tucked in the crook of someone's neck. He sat in between two legs splayed out in strange, uncomfortable angles around him. Dream, he quickly identified, was hurriedly bandaging a large portion of his right arm, or, the reddish blurry mess that remained. "That doesn't look healthy," he grumbled, too quiet for his friend to hear the remark. Dream delivered another tug to the bandages around the wound and jolted when he groaned this time.

From the looks of it, a bite had scraped off part of his skin and left a nasty mess, though George wasn't awake enough to feel the full extent of the pain. The blood under the coverings squelched as Dream mercilessly tightened the white fabric around his wounds. The world was dark and didn't feel in focus, and George was obviously disoriented. Relative to anything but his companion, he didn't know where he was.

A particularly ruthless pull seemed to jolt George's nerve endings awake, and his forearm erupted in burning pain. He winced immediately and shoved his face into Dream's neck as he tried to quiet a cry. Underneath the sweat and scent of coal, George could vaguely sense the smell of sunflowers and pumpkin. That, or his mind was tricking him as it tried desperately to distract and comfort him from the intense pain as it receded gruesomely slowly. That was more possible. He felt a quick hand pat the back of his head in what he guessed was reassurance. Yet, Dream's nimble hands didn't abandon their work on wrapping the wound until several, agonizing minutes later, when a lazy bow tied up his handiwork.

"Good morning," He murmured, and George scoffed mentally, the expression falling to his face. Dream chuckled before continuing. "You fell and hit your head, clutz." That explained a lot.

"A zombie bit you before I could fend it off, but, hey, your arm's fine now, at least. I took care of the mark that spider made as well, and wrapped your hands for better support with some extra. Watch your step next time." The simple explanation was soft-spoken and to the point. Even though the throbbing headache that misted his thoughts, George followed along. He hadn't paid a lot of attention to his hands, but now that he looked, they were wrapped up similarly to Dream's.

While comparing, though, he couldn't help but notice a large, roughly torn gash running down Dream's unbandaged arm. The jagged outline of red traced the edges of his forearm, and it was surprising it didn't hit a major artery. His shock must have been readable, because Dream groaned in slight annoyance in remembrance of his wound. He started dressing it as well. "Zombie back there got a sword from somewhere. It's nasty, but it'll heal. I just wanted to make sure you were okay." A few stray blood droplets fell to George's chest plate as he worked and chatted. That wound was far worse than any of George's, and a clashing cocktail of warm, fluffy clouds grew in his chest along with the sinking drop of his heart to his stomach. Dream putting off bandaging such a significant injury on his behalf was irresponsible, horrifying, and something George was going to plead for him to not do again. But the fact that he did left George with an unexplainable feeling of warmth he felt guilty for.

The metallic smell of their blood combined filled the tiny crawl space, and George noted the crude pile of rocks blocking the exit to his left. Most of the cobble had fingerprints colored dark, and dark red smears. Based on the graphic trail of what he assumed was more of his friend's blood than theirs, it was assumed Dream had dragged George in.

They were both as healed as they were going to be, so the bandages were shoved back into a pack. Dream had nothing else to do with his hands, so they hesitantly fell over George's shoulders and lay joint his chest. He sighed. They both needed a moment before leaving.

George had realized their position was more than a little close for a friend as new as Dream, especially by his standards. But, with his shoulder acting as a good enough pillow, this was undeniably the most comfortable one he could get in such a small, cramped, and jagged space. He accepted he would have to deal with the metal of Dream's shoulder plates digging slightly into his back. Besides, though he didn't plan on saying anything- something told him his relation to Dream went a lot deeper than the past week's worth of friendship. Something told him that Dream was much, much more critical to him. His only real evidence was a haphazard and fading false memory of Dream.

The hands that picked at a peeling scrap of metal on George's chest plate finally stilled, and he felt Dream straighten up behind him. He followed suit.

"Listen, this trip was fun as all hell, but... Also pretty much a failure," Dream admitted. It wasn't like he was lying. Not long after exiting the pool and hopping down one of the two ravines, they realized neither had picked up any of the wood they'd left upstairs, and didn't have a single stick to make torches. George cursed at himself for the mistake, but Dream laughed it off and insisted they kept moving. So, they did.

It didn't go smoothly. It seemed that, in every little dark corner, something was hiding for them. George recalled that, a few hours ago, he did manage to unearth a good deal of iron while Dream was on lookout for danger, and Dream had insisted on stopping for coal every time they weren't running for their lives. Regardless, their packs sat mostly empty.

"We'll come better prepared next time, but we have to live to see a next time, first." Dream said, squeezing past him to the exit and pulling out his pick.

"Game plan is to fucking run, and don't fall this time. I'll cover you." The words hung heavy in the air, and George briefly considered disputing him. He could fight fine, if a little worse comparatively, and Dream was the most injured one. He didn't need to run like a coward and be protected like a child. Regardless, George waved his hand dismissively and groaned. "I'll cover you if you cover me," he compromised.

"Deal."

The moment a ray of light shone in from the hole Dream had mined, chaos ran free. George's breath felt uneven, and his feet were beginning to sting again. His glasses had a large smudge in the left eye, but there was no time to clean them off in his frenzy. He could hear shouting not far behind as arrows whizzed and grueling sounds of flesh being ripped through mercilessly filled the air. The blue-shirted man rounded a corner and skidded on his heels to a stop, catching his breath as he waited for his friend.

Their path had been going up, up, up, with little to no dead ends so far. George hated estimating so soon, but he guessed that they would hit the surface where they could find their cave and camp again within the next hour. The smaller man was tired, emotionally, and physically. It felt like one more blow to the heart or flesh would be enough to rid the world of him. It would take time, alone, for him to rethink everything he knew now and recharge. His breathing evened out. He stood waiting as he heard the clashing behind him as Dream valiantly fought off easy enemies. Looking to the future and daydreaming wasn't smart considering how unpredictable the night's future would be. Yet, his mind was already painting a picture.

George could see it now. He and Dream would head home and recook some of the food in his pack. He could sit with the masked man at their temporary home, wrapped in their blankets, woundless and safe. Maybe, they would talk for a few hours about whatever they chose. Perhaps the stars, or their mining adventure. The stone floor would probably be rough and cold, but the blankets' soft cotton would far outweigh the unpleasant texture. Crickets would chirp as Dream's velvety voice would softly discuss and joke with him. George's stupid mistake of falling would be laughed at and forgiven. In the musty, dark cavern, he could almost feel the worn grooves of a wooden bowl rest in his cupped hands. Soon, everything would be peaceful.

".....ssSssssSSSSSS," George's mind was distracted, but it caught up just in time to recognize what was happening. The green, mossy skin of the enemy that snuck beside him began to violently expand, and a bright light bubbled inside of them. His brain immediately went into overdrive with escape plans, and time seemed to slip away in seconds as his shield was seized off his back and brandished towards the side of the explosion. When it was too late, and his weight was shifted, he saw his friend and former protector barreling towards him in a flurry of lime green with vastly different plans.

"GEORGE!"

His brain froze as Dream leaped at the enemy next to him, axe in hand. His hoodie was ripped, and the red-stained skin beneath it peaked out. Blood ran down the front of his face and stained his bared teeth in an unflattering fashion, and an arrow stuck out of the dense wood of his mask. Even

the bandages on his bad arm looked to be unraveling- He looked like he was a hit away from death.

George didn't consider himself some sort of noble saint, or martyr. He'd raided villages for their loot and killed their defenders before, and hunted innocent animals without mercy. He would even crush flowers under his boots rather than walk around them on bad days. Regardless, George considered himself moral. Though his subconscious acted before he could process the details- every ounce of him knew he couldn't let Dream do what he was planning and still sleep well tonight.

Time seemed to go in slow motion for them both as a large plank of wood and iron slammed into Dream's front, and he was shoved away from the beast he was charging against. He quickly pieced the puzzle together, and realized that it was George's shield blocking his vision. Dream's blood ran cold. Just as he peeked over, ready to yell a warning, a bright dash of light blinded them, and the creature imploded with a resounding *boom*.

His breath was knocked out of him with an 'uuf' as Dream's back hit the stone, and his head bounced on the hard ground. He slid a few feet before his form finally came to a stop, and he stilled. His mind blanked as every nerve ending groaned in collective soreness, and he swore he could feel blood on the back of his head. The ringing in his ears was unbearable, but the silence that roared when it receded was deafening. He coughed as dust resettled in the dark cave, and tried his hardest to sit up. Once he trusted his eyes again, Dream shoved the half-broken shield off him, and adjusted them to a scene he'd never wanted to see.

George was lying on his back, motionless. Only when his eyes were forced to focus did he see the ragged, uneven breathing that George was forcing himself through. He was launched much further than his companion and laid against a jagged stone wall. A jutted piece of stone stuck into his side at an extreme angle, and Dream could tell it had to have broken a few ribs, if not impaled his lung. His leg was twisted in the wrong direction, and a puddle of blood was pooling around his head. He didn't even look alive.

Dream kept staring, several minutes longer than he should have. He should be getting up, running over, shouting, just *something*. But he couldn't stop himself. The masked man's horror faded, and his breathing slowed down to calm levels. George was gasping desperately for air as he began to come to again, and Dream observed with hawk-like diligence the shock on his features as he stared down at the wounds. His glasses were smudged, and his hair was messy, but Dream's sympathy drained into a frightening indifference that scared himself in that brief moment he still cared. His jaw cut it's slack, and his lips pulled into a fine line.

Faint shards of foggy memories dusted his mind. Each one stung. They felt like ghosts floating about his head, whispering, biting, haunting him. None of the memories were ones he wanted, but they were ones he realized he needed. He vaguely remembered George's screaming and gibberish

begs for mercy as his silence offered none in a blackened, charred hellscape. Then, a sharp portrait of swampland came to mind. George desperately ran away from him with water in his shoes and lily pads sticking to his clothes. He could remember everything down to the drops of blood as they stained the water. Another memory attacked him- The image of who he thought was his friend, prone and near dead from a gushing neck wound. George was defended by a hooded figure, one that huntsman fought to a breaking point. Dream recalled himself fade away from reality as the character ran to help a long gone George.

Then, he was back to reality, the memories of a distant demon in the back of his head. Dream could still feel the phantom wounds once inflicted on him by the blue-shirted stranger now dying in front of him. It made his blood rush in his ears, and boil in his heart. George wasn't who he thought he was. *Dream* wasn't who he thought he was.

It was time to finish the job.

"Dr... I-I'm sorr-sorry..." George's breaths were shallow, and his words like faint whispers ringing in his head. He sounded like a hurt child who's been crying for hours. His elbow was propped up against a rock, one hand flat against the stone in front of him. Dream's change in demeanor hadn't yet been noticed. He wasn't even sure his victim was still grounded enough to register someone was there with him, anymore.

Dream's boots stepped closer and closer. The sword in his hand was duller from the fights previous to this one, but it could still finish a simple task. A part of him was panicked and desperately trying to rip the sword from his own hand. *'Am I really doing this?'* He asked himself, though this new, determined statue tucked his humanity in the back of his mind. *'Am I really killing someone?'*

The tap of his feet soon stopped, and he stood in a puddle of his friend's blood. The goalpost was clear. This is how the game is played. This is how he 'wins.' His eyes fogged over under the mask, and he began to raise his sword-

"...Dream?"

George's voice was weak and raspy, but Dream heard him crystal clear. His pupils refocused, and his heart skipped whenever he saw George staring up at him. An eye poked out from under his crooked lenses with a longing, pointed stare. He could barely see him in the dark of the cave, but there was just enough light to see the pitiful expression. His eyes shone glass-like and dead, as if stolen from a doll, yet human enough to be frightened. The corner of George's lips were in a hopeful smile, but Dream could see it waver. It was apparent- George was terrified. The bittersweet, genuine look that graced his face threw the hunter off guard long enough for the adrenaline to wear off. The human part of him was able to rip control from whatever overtook him, and the sword slipped from his grasp entirely to hit the cold stone floor. Dream didn't realize his

friend was tense until George recognized the peaceful switch and let out the breath they held. A teaspoon of guilt mixed into Dream's already building dread.

"You know I can-can't make it... Right?..." George's breathy, hushed voice spoke as Dream knelt next to him. One hand was already shoved in his slung-off pack, rooting for bandages. George knew the notion wouldn't get acknowledged.

Every nerve ending felt like it was duly stinging, and under his arm, George swore he could see a rib poking out near the rock. Usually, he could feel the rush and adrenaline. Dying would often be a predictable, quick action- not like this. Everything felt detected and foggy. Dying felt more like trying not to blackout during a movie than anything, minus extra chest pain.

He stole a glance at Dream. George decided he looked too tired. His skin had taken on a dusty, coal-black dusting the miner didn't think fitted him, and he was biting down hard on the inside of his cheeks. He couldn't see the blonde's eyes, of course, but he knew there were bags under them. His hand reached out and gripped the green fabric right above Dream's wrist, and he felt him pause. His eyes were on him, but George couldn't look at him.

"Dream... I, it's... Getting hard to breathe..."

"No," Dream said softly, though his voice had a particular venom that denied the statement's truth. His hands started rampaging his bag again, his movements much more sporadic and panicked. "No, no, no, just, George, listen to me, hang in there a few minutes, I can find it. Just fucking chill dude, man up and c-cut that out."

George could see his panic growing as anger poisoned the end of his sharp tongue, but the aggression was ignored. The dying man wondered if it was worth informing him he shoved them in the front pocket earlier, the only one he hasn't checked. It might calm his friend down, but George knew it wouldn't work long with him in this state. His head was bleeding, and he couldn't walk. Dream was too injured to carry him, and they sat in the open. Dying was absolutely terrifying, George had to admit. Despite being dumb enough to do it often, he never got used to the feeling of plunging into a pool of infinite void that ripped away at his soul. Reemerging was always like a breath of fresh air. Still, it always took everything out of him to claw his way to the surface a centimeter at a time, suffocating every inch of the way.

He hated dying. But his time was running out. If the blood loss didn't get him, the hole in his lung would. He heard Dream start ravaging through his bag, but he grabbed his arm again, firmer this time. Dream looked genuinely annoyed when he looked up this time, but stayed silent as he waited for George to talk.

"Just... It isn't that bad, Dream. I," He paused, sucking in air through his teeth. Pain shot through his lung and made his grip tighten, stinging tart enough to make him want to cry. Regardless, he continued to ramble as his vision darkened. Dream's mouth parted, and he looked visibly alarmed. George was guessing it was evident how close he was to going under. Maybe, just maybe, he realized how hopeless saving him was, finally. Regardless, he flashed him a last, small smile as he fumbled to interlock their hands. "You're a cool person, Dream... Thanks for worrying, but don't look so... Ah, I'll see you so... I'll see.."

He couldn't blame himself too much for failing to finish his sentence.

The last of his vision was gone, like a lightbulb giving out, and his head submerged into the cruel darkness, cold and suffocating. Though it was only a different form of torture, he was no longer brimming with pain. Very distantly, he heard Dream's shouts booming at the top of his lungs, and felt a firm grip on his arm that cut off his slowing circulation. The coldness grew and beckoned him further. His mind went blank with fear as the cold, unletting touch of death roughly grabbed at his very soul. He knew it wouldn't last forever, and he would be back in the warm blankets Dream allotted them soon. Yet, it was still a terrifying prospect that he had to fight so hard to grasp the light that was life again. The dead man was barely paying attention to the physical realm anymore. His heartbeat fully stopped, and his death was finalized- Yet, as everything faded, George swore he felt something wet fall on his cheek.

Dream didn't have healthy coping mechanisms for situations like this.

Another zombie went down; its decaying head was smashed inwards as a skeleton's rib was staked into his head. The warrior could feel the undead allies' hesitance around him. Though his arm was mangled, and blood dripped down into his blurred vision, he knew they feared him. The zombies, with whatever brain matter they had left, walked towards him much slower than he knew they could with fear in their decaying eyes. The thin, white frames of the archers left their arrows loaded in their bow, terrified of ending up like the disembodied skulls nearby. Their fear was obvious, and it made his adrenaline rush. It afforded him much, much more power to be feared.

Creepers were the only ones with enough of a death wish to treat him as usual, and it pissed him off. One barreled at him from behind in the ravine as he held George's shield to a skeleton across a stream of lava. When his eyes locked onto the form approaching him, his hair stood up. The light inside the creature as an insult to injury, and he wouldn't let them pour salt in his wounds. Dream's roughened and bleeding hands grappled the stiff, grassy camouflage of the beast to hurl it at its distressed allies. The blast was large, and splattered enough lava on Dream to burn his torn pants and significantly damage large blotches of the skin. As more things crept towards him from the dark corners of the cave, a logical voice screamed at him to leave before he was as gone as his late friend. For once, he surrendered to it.

The walk back was as somber as imaginable, even with the mobs dead and cleared. Dream couldn't bear to think of George's last moments alive, yet they looped in his head. How he, in his drunk-on-pain stake, tried to talk Dream out of panicking. A shudder ran down his spin. If he'd remembered where the bandages were- *No*, Dream thought. His mistake happened long before that. *If I had let George take care of the stupid creeper, things would have been alright.*

His dragging boots kicked up stones that, soon, settled back down into the ancient cave system as his path continued without them. Dream may have been alone on the home stretch, but he didn't feel like a winner.

Since the beginning, Dream had never been cautious with the life gifted to him. He'd taken advantage of it in every way possible, risking it at every odd corner. He never considered how easily it could slip. Today seemed like a routine trip, filled with monster fights, and mining, and everything he loved in an adventure. He and George were down in their luck near the end, but it was *fine*, they were done with their work and heading home to stay and eat, laugh, and sleep late into tomorrow evening. Now, Dream realized, he would brave the rest of his miserable trip alone.

It might have been odd to go out on a trip with a total stranger, but at the time to him, it seemed fun. An adventure of bonding and hardship. A duality of bad laughs and good fights. At first, he wanted to know everything about the strange boy he met with white glasses and lovely laughter. With this mix of pain in his chest threatening to rip through and destroy him, he couldn't remember why he wanted to know George.

I should have shot him, briefly popped in his head as he thought back to their first encounter. The visceral reaction of disgust it garnered once his consciousness caught up was enough to silence the morally dubious, dark spot of his thoughts for the day. But the damage was done.

The light of their camp was visible from below in the cavern. Sunlight might have been too, but night blanketed the sky in a display of constellations the masked traveler would have stopped to admire any other night.

Considering the grand entrance the duo made on the way down, Dream couldn't backtrack up very well. Roughly twenty minutes of failed rockclimbing attempts and vile cursing occurred before Dream was willing to put his wary trust in a vine so frail he wouldn't want a cat to try climbing it. He looped a vine around one foot, rubbed his hands together, and got to work lifting himself up.

Sweat trickled down his forehead, and his messed up, distracted thoughts made him fall twice, but the top of the ravine was just in reach. Dream couldn't hear anything outside the pounding in his ears, but he swore he could smell some sort of... Meat? He smelled steak, and his heart dropped

when he realized George likely left the food supply open. Having to toss out decaying meat was the worst thing that could have ended this dreadful day.

Roughened palms slammed onto the smooth ground with slaps as Dream came up, and he took a moment to sit and rest at the top. Once competent, he sighed and forced the legs under him to move to the nearby door of their camp. The tall, heartbroken idiot needed to face reality sometime. Forcing himself to go through that door and cry for hours on end seemed to be the only real way to deal with today.

The smell of cooked food invaded his senses as he stepped in, but it was the clinking of dishes made his heart skip. The person making the ruckus caught noticed of him as soon as his footsteps could be heard. Tired brown eyes peered out from the almond locks that covered them and locked with where his were. The gloomy ghost sitting on the floor of their den forced its pink, chapped lips to pull into a tired smile.

"Hey, Dream. Welcome h-h-home."

George's stuttering was new, and his voice crackled unpredictably. He was draped in the blanket he was lent at the very beginning of the trip and rested on the floor eating from a wooden dish. Another one sat covered on the floor, not far off. The shorter man's words were soft-spoken and weak, and Dream felt every muscle tighten as he watched him struggle through them with wheezing breaths. His eyes burned like pepper. He couldn't tell what emotion caused it.

Dream's breath caught in his throat as he noticed something around his friend's eyes for the first time- With his eyes tearing up and vision blurry, he couldn't get a good enough look before George realized his mistake and cast his gaze down. George turned back to the small, makeshift dining set he had set out, waiting for him to sit down and join him. Dream didn't feel like he could move.

"I cooked us supper. I'm, um, sor-sor-" He paused, taking a breath before trying to utter the words again. Dream held onto every syllable. "Ugh, s-sorry about... Yeah. Um, can I have my glasses back?" The emotions boiling inside Dream didn't make sense. Logically, none of this made sense, but this especially. He needed proof this wasn't a cruel trick.

"Dream? You haven't answered me at all, you k-know." George murmured, staring down at his plate. He'd noticed he hadn't heard a squeak out of his friend the moment he stepped in the doorway. He'd expected him to at least come sit down with him, but the silence was starting to concern him.

When a large form collided with George's back, hard enough to nearly tumble him, George's soul

almost jolted out of his skin for a second time that day. He was ready to shove Dream off with the little strength he had, and protest the two arms snaking around him. He was *weak*, frail, he needed rest. *What the hell did Dream think he was doing?*

His determination ebbed away when he heard the squeaky, scared noise claw its way out of Dream's throat. It sounded somewhere between a sob and a growl, and it made him tense. It wasn't long until he pieced together that Dream was crying. Barely and silently, but he could feel hot tears seeping through the fabric of his shirt. George swallowed, not wanting to move for fear of upsetting him further. The wooden mask was wedged in his shoulder blades uncomfortably, and his arms were shackled down by the sturdy pair locked around him.

The first few moments were awkward for George, as his mind raced and he tried to decide what to do about... this. He didn't expect a reaction this visceral. Whether or not his memories of another time were real or fake, Dream's response confirmed to him the duo had some particular type of bond that went beyond the past week's worth of joking around. Even if it was solely out of a need born from eras of seclusion, one's life was essential to the other. Dream wouldn't act this emotional for just anything.

The blood was starting to leak through Dream's bandaged arm to stain his pants and blanket. George traced his fingers along the length of an arrow that was plunged into the unraveled, bloodied bandages. He'd forgotten Dream was still very injured, else he would have gotten supplies and went to meet him. It was even worse than the last time he last saw him. George looked back to a mess of sweaty, stringy blonde hair spilling over his shoulder as his friend tried to hold in choked sobs into his shoulder. An awkward, but sincere pat was delivered to the top of Dream's head, and George ruffled his hair ever so slightly.

"Your food is getting cold. We can talk about this... later." Silence met him, and he pulled his hand away. A moment later he felt shifting, and in a wavering and dampened voice, Dream raised his head and spoke. "Yeah. Um, I'm sorry. O-Okay..."

His arms slipped away, and his digits untangled themselves from the blue shirt he gripped for all life. His mask drew away from George's shoulder. Dream knew the hug was probably uncomfortable and unappreciated based on George's reaction. He admitted to himself it was *selfish*, as much the word stung. The trembling survivalist started to voice an apology for the out-of-line behavior, but the words lodged in his throat when an arm hooked over his shoulder and George pulled him into a more proper hug. His head rested on the sky blue fabric of George's shoulder, and he calmed down as he felt his friend pat his back. It didn't last long, and wasn't some heart-achingly deep scene, but it happened. It was a swift, sweet gesture. That alone mended the broken situation to a bit more of an acceptable level. He saw George slip him a weak smile as they broke away. He'd pulled his glasses from Dream's back pocket, and quickly slid them back into place. A few more scratches ruined their appearance, but his friend looked more like himself again.

"Y-You know, if I knew you preferred steak cold, I would have served it raw," George remarked, and Dream knew his eyes were twinkling behind the black lenses. Dream sighed, shaking his head as a smile traitorously sat on his lips. The taller boy finally settled down across from his friend, and pulled a blanket over his aching shoulders to mirror him.

"Shut up and hand me my plate."

Chapter End Notes

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[Trigger Warnings: Blood, Violence, Injury, Major Character Death]

Chapter 7

Chapter Summary

A death is not an easy thing to forget.

But, a night in your best friend's arms might make you forget it some.

Chapter Notes

enjoy!! i worked really hard on this. please check endnotes :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“So,” Dream started, his voice hesitant as he collected his thoughts. George sat across from him, snug in his blanket with a cup of tea in his hand. He sipped at it as he waited patiently for Dream to finish.

“Just to summarize...” Dream cleared his throat. “Death isn’t permanent.”

“De-Death is not permanent.” George reiterated, his voice cracking under pressure. He cursed his stutter, firming his grip of the cup handle and taking another sip of tea to ward it off. His sore throat was more annoying than anything, and he was hoping it would be gone by tomorrow.

Dream held his mostly empty bowl, looking down at the center of the makeshift tablecloth. George’s gaze stayed on his friend, studying his confused expression, and waiting for the inevitable flood of questions. As much as he loved his companion, he didn’t consider his paygrade high enough for this. Mostly because he didn’t have one in the first place.

“I want to believe you, but this feels like a mean joke,” Dream admitted, his shoulders slouching. His friend’s head bowed down, and he pinched the bridge of his nose. A sigh escaped George as he watched.

“It feels more like a jok-joke that you don’t know this, Dream. Are you really trying to tell me you’re just some sort of survivalist g-god? That you’ve never died a s-s-single time?” George’s words rolled off his tongue more venomous than he would have hoped, and he saw Dream retract. George didn’t react immediately, simply readjusted the blanket around his shoulders, and going back to picking at crumbs.

A couple minutes more of silence pulled out between them. Dream picked at the last of his reheated steak, and George eventually stood and walked off to check their chest for some sort of sugar-filled distraction for the pair. He rummaged through uncooked meat and raw vegetables haphazardly arranged for a long while before he emerged with what he was hunting: Pumpkin pie.

After grabbing two glasses and a bucket of milk, he set their desert down on the table in front of them, firmly enough to get Dream's attention. The sulking, completentative frown on his face quickly changed. They silently and mutually agreed to let go of their pain for a few minutes and indulge in a distraction. George swore he could feel the warmth creeping over him when Dream's appreciative smile made his heart skip.

His heart skipped again when Dream swiftly unsheathed his blood-dried blade and began trying to cut into the pie. Several more minutes of shouting, shoving, and convincing Dream he did, in fact, pack knives from the kitchen, ensued before the swordsman resheathed his weapon and sat back. A noticeable smirk graced his lips, now, as George turned his back to him and searched their bags from across the room.

“Honestly, you are such a th-three year old. Who babysat you before I came around?” George absentmindedly complained, trying his best to act like he didn’t hear the snorts and giggles behind him. His hands rummaged through the blankets and supplies in his overstuffed pack, trying to feel the cold metal handle of the tool he knew he brought.

“I babysit myself very well, thank you,” Dream replied finally, and corner’s of George’s lips shot up in a smile.

“Yeah, right. You probably would be starving if I wasn’t here to spoon feed you,” George teased as his hand grasped cold metal, and he pulled out one of the knives tucked in the bottom of the pack. When he turned, he found Dream was absolutely beaming at him, and he settled back down in his spot and tried to ignore the warmth flooding his chest. Regardless, he couldn’t deny seeing Dream happy was a welcome change.

The knife cut into the pie’s silky filling, nearby the rough, messy mixture of pumpkin and grime his friend caused nearby. Thankfully, they had started at the crust with their crude slice instead of the middle, meaning that little of actual value was lost. He ignored the blemish as best as possible, but his purposeful unawareness was evident to the crackhead across from him, unfortunately. George ignored the kettle going off in their throat as he messily slopped a slice down onto his friend’s plate and shoved it to him.

The atmosphere wined down after that. They both had their food in front of them, and all

conversation seemed to have faded as they shoveled the delicacy into watering mouths. George didn't even realize how much time had passed in peaceful silence until he'd finished his slice, and a green sleeve caught his eye as Dream reached to cut himself a second. George decided that now was as good a time as any to toss a new, light conversation topic out afloat.

It would be helpful if he had one.

He struggled to think of something to bring up as Dream's expression slowly faded back into contemplation and worry, but none came to mind. He was almost ready to seriously discuss the weather, as wonderfully refreshing as that was, but Dream beat him to the punch.

“...George?”

Since the first time they met, Dream's voice always spoke in a rough, verging commanding tone, always just aloof enough to seem friendly. George couldn't help but feel that a tinge of mischief always seemed to lurk behind his every word, no matter how mundane. Though it terrified him the first time he heard it, it quickly blended into the natural comfort he found in Dream's friendship. The tone gave a liveliness to their conversations that enamored him, though George would never admit.

The voice that just croaked out his name was not Dream's. It was an empty and energyless version of the man who was with him only a mere moment ago. It unsettled him and twisted the knife lodged in George's stomach.

“Yeah?” He swallowed, waiting patiently for a response as he picked at a loose, grey string on the seam of his pants. His brown eyes couldn't meet the sharp, sorrowed gaze he felt on him.

“I'm sorry it's hard for me to believe this,” He started, and George sucked in a breath as his hand twitched, and the seam ripped open a bit. Dream continued.

“But, I trust you. The evidence deeply contradicts me, and you're sitting here instead of wasting away at the bottom of a cave. And, well...” He heard shifting, and the clinking of silverware as their dining mat was pushed out of the way. Dream's grip on his forearm forced him to finally look up to the half-masked face, one suddenly close enough to George's for him to feel Dream's breath dust the tip of his nose.

He looked to find a wavering smile sitting on the fighter's hesitant lips, like a glass antique on the

edge of a rigidity bookshelf. The shaken adventurer cleared his throat before attempting to speak to him.

“I’m really, really happy to see you again... I didn’t know how I was going to bear this without you.” Dream paused, and he could feel him scanning George’s shocked, red face.

“I consider you my friend, George. Friend’s don’t lie, right?”

“Friends don’t lie,” George repeated back like a mantra, taken aback and too astounded to do much else.

Regardless, he still meant his words, and it showed. Dream’s smile widened. His arm was released, and his companion sat back and yanked his hood back up. He picked up his abandoned plate to finish the half-eaten pie he left, while George quietly contemplated what the hell had just happened.

His face was still overheated, and he knew Dream noticed, so he was desperately trying to subdue what he was sure was embarrassment and shock. His friend’s sweet words, which displayed more trust than he could ever reasonably ask for, seemed to replay in his head repeatedly. It was enough to make him almost dizzy.

Dream had finished his dessert and was talking to him by the time he’d snapped out of whatever daze he was sent into. Thankfully, the blonde boy hadn’t noticed he was completely ignored, and George could catch the tail end of what he was being told.

“...And after we have all the ingots cooled and sorted, maybe go to bed. It’s cold out, so I added more blankets to our setup,” Dream explained, though George was quick to glance over notice that wasn’t all he’s done. On top of tossing the mismatched, colorful array of old blankets onto their temporary beds, he’d also moved them back together at some point when George wasn’t looking. He grinned. *What an ass.*

Regardless, George felt the day weighing on him, almost more than his recent plunge into darkness already did. His bones felt like hollowed wood on the verge of splintering, and his eyes burned the more he tried to keep them open. He wasn’t going to launch a debate at this hour.

“Let’s do it.”

The last of the ingots were simmering in the blast furnace, and George leaned back against the wall in relief as Dream tossed more coal onto the fires. It was a stupidly more formidable job than either of them remember it being.

They split up their responsibilities early on, yet that didn't make the job any easier. George could still feel the searing pain of burns on his hands and arms from being too clumsy with their ore. Dream was spared suffering, but made up for it in absolute filthiness- head to toe, he was coated in ashy, black coal.

Once George took the last of the ore out and stored it, the duo stood, nodded, and silently began their nightly routines. While Dream yanked off his filthy layers of clothes in the corner of their room, George kept his attire on and focused on brushing his teeth in a water bucket he'd brought earlier before Dream arrived home.

He gave a curious glance behind him as his friend, clad in nothing other than a tank top and boxers, gathered their pile of sweaty clothes under his less injured arm. He was beginning to get more used to Dream's antics, though, and his breath hardly hitched at his next crazed show. Hell, he almost predicted it- Dream bolted out the door and into the night.

George still scampered to the door with his heart pounding, watching the idiot hastily secure their clothes under rocks to wash in the nearby stream.

While multiple zombies sicced him, of course.

If George cared any less for Dream's safety, he might have laughed at the absurdity of it and stayed in their camp's relative safety. His jaw tightened, and he felt around the doorway for the sword he'd laid down, acorn eyes ever focused on the shouting, struggling masked man by the creek. He did care, unfortunately. That's why, half an hour later, two idiots were walking back to base: bitten, scratched, but with their clothes washing out as intended. George made sure to deliver an extra strict rant all the way back for this stunt.

“George?” Dream asked whenever they arrived home. George perked up at his name, glancing up from where he was sorting the contents of his pockets out on the desk to grab tomorrow. Dream was similarly sorting something- items in their material chest, it seemed.

“Yeah?” He replied.

“You seem tired. Go ahead and get in bed while I finish everything else up.”

George briefly considered protesting, but shrugged. “You sure...? Well, I won’t complain. Thanks.”

George slipped into the covers, shivering a bit as the cold fabric initially touched him. He nevertheless settled in, glasses still resting on the bridge of his nose while waiting for his friend to finish up last-minute preparations and tasks.

George absentmindedly watched through tinted lenses as Dream closed the door, and briefly considered how childish it was for him to hide his eyes. His friend had seen them already anyways- did it even matter? Was it coming off as rude?

Regardless, the notion passed. George had this conversation with himself before- he didn’t like his eyes being exposed if he could help it, and his comfort levels hadn’t switched overnight. He peered at the golden locks on the back of his friend’s head as Dream blew out the torches on the wall. Thin, black straps laced through it and held his friend’s wooden mask in place. George knew it was a mutual struggle to some capacity.

After what seemed like forever, Dream let out a pained sigh and finally sat down on the comforting, pillow presence of the bed. His muscles relaxed for a moment, before Dream’s hands, reached up, rustling through blind hair to find and untie a hidden knot. The wooden artifact that covered his face thudded down into his lap, and one of Dream’s hands extended behind him wordlessly for George’s glasses. They were placed in his palm.

When they were settled and their items put away, finally, Dream blew out the final torch above their bed and rustled into his own bedroll next to George. For a few, peaceful minutes after they settled in, George was able to enjoy the peace. Faint glimpses of moonlight streamed in near their doorway, but it was too dark to see much of anything past swords gleaming at the entrance. He could hear Dream’s gentle breathing nearby, starting to slow down into a more restful pattern. His own eyes fluttered, and in a few more minutes, he would have been asleep.

However, while George considered the quiet calming and sleep-inducing, it’s only effect on Dream was increased boredom.

“George?”

“Mm?” One of his dark eyes half opened, looking roughly in the direction Dream lay in. He was sleepy, but he figured after what his friend had been through today, the topic might be critical enough to warrant him staying up.

George was wrong.

“If sheep get uncomfortable without being sheared in a long time, why were they born with wool?” He heard rustling as Dream turned to him, flicking his side with his pointer to wake him up. The sleepy miner winced, and a deeply annoyed sigh left him.

“I don’t know, Dream.”

“Like, okay, think about it. It might make sense for a village sheep to be like that if it’s little sheep-family was like that for a long, long time, but I see villagers herding in new sheep all the time! Plus, wild sheep end up overgrown too- like, that’s totally weird, right?” Dream’s voice didn’t house the slightest bit of tiredness in it. If anything, this was the most energetic it sounded all day.

“Dream, I don’t care.” George murmured almost inaudibly into his pillow, though he knew it was received when Dream went utterly silent. For a precious moment, the brunet thought that was that, and they would have this weird sheep-wool conversation over breakfast tomorrow. But, it really should have been apparent to him that Dream wasn’t a quitter. An ice-cold hand snaked over and paralyzed his side, and George jolted hard enough to slam his back into the wall.

“What the fuck, Dream!” He hoarsely shouted, wide awake and leaning against his elbow as he tried to catch his breath. Wheezing came from the pillow nearby, only intensifying when George tried to slap Dream (and missed horribly.)

“What? You were mean first!” Dream laughed out defensively, though it’s clear he didn’t take it too seriously.

“I was harassed first!” He shrieked out, garnering no sympathy but plenty more hearty chuckles. Dream tried again to snake his icy grasp over to George, but he was promptly shoved away as his annoyed companion pulled the blankets over his head.

Dream's feet turned out to be much colder. At least based on George's offended shouting when one was pressed against the annoyed adventurer's leg.

"Cold cold cold," George yipped, kicking away his friend, and inadvertently starting a frosty game of footsies he was not amused by. "Are you made of snow or something? Jesus, Dream!"

"Oh, come on, you love me."

"Asshole."

Eventually, Dream let it be, and George was finally able to pass out. Dream wasn't.

He tossed and turned for hours. Logically, he was exhausted and needed sleep. But he couldn't feel any exhaustion with thoughts fogging his mind and bad memories revisiting him. Locks of blonde hair stuck to his face, and the warmth of the bed under him seemed scalding hot. A 'tsk' left him finally, and his hand blindly reached out and searched the makeshift counter until he was able to find his mask.

It took him less than 10 minutes to get ready, lazily tying his mask on, and very, VERY slowly putting on his chest plate to prevent any metal rattling. An unlit torch was tucked into his boxer's waistband, and his sword was taken from the wall nearest the entrance. He was prepared for a small walk, one to clear his head.

Moonlight more openly streamed now, and though it didn't reach the corner George lay in, he glanced back anyways. Dream could hear the sleeping boy's soft, relaxed breaths- they were sound asleep. George was fine and could handle it if something was to wander in here while he was gone, he convinced himself. Dream, as a precaution, moved a bow next to the bed, and then he was off.

George was awake.

He wasn't sure what woke him first, or if he did it on his own. Regardless, his eyes were open now, and something became apparent- Dream was gone.

George patted the spot where he was, finding it cold. One hand rubbed at his eyes while he sat up, looking around the dark room. It was much darker than when George had fallen asleep, and distantly, he swore he could hear thunder approaching, though no rain fell yet.

He knew he wouldn't fall back to sleep alone, especially when Dream might need aid upon arrival. If he didn't, he might instead need a slap. George groaned and forced himself to sit up in bed. He fumbled with his glasses and the flint for a few minutes before he could relight a torch. He squinted against the sudden light that filled the room, trying his best to adjust to the harsh flame. He could do for a spot of tea right now, and he swore Dream had some leaves in his bag. It probably wouldn't be a big deal if he borrowed them.

It only took a few minutes to set a kettle to boil on the stove for some water, and he waited for bubbles to take form. A breeze drifted in as he stared down into the iron pot, and he inhaled the smell of saltwater and sand wafting in the room. A look outside wouldn't hurt, he supposed.

He wasn't surprised to find fresh boot tracks in the mud outside, nor was he astonished that the sand was disturbed outside the cavern's mouth. George leaned against the doorway and peered out, his eyes tracking over Dream's clumsy steps as they gained composure and soon became feather-light. Untraceable, undetectable, and almost like he'd disappeared and let the void-black night sky swallow him. The sandy beach it seemed he was heading off into was untouched, and no indication of his tracks shown in the muddy ground of the nearby plains, either.

It indeed was a miracle that George found him again. Dumb luck that he stopped at the right place at the right time of day, and even dumber luck he ran into the one person willing to give him information on the person he sought. Dream was an elusive entity on his own. If it wasn't for those he associated with, he wouldn't be on the map.

The crackling and popping from the interior behind him alerted him that the water was absolutely done boiling, and he scampered back in with hardly a look around. Dream knew what he was doing, whatever the hell it was. George would be here waiting for him when he got back.

George sat down on the edge of the bedroll, a cup of tea nearby, and his sword in hand. He went to reach over to Dream's bag, only to find it gone as well. A bow sat in its place, with his glasses and the flint he was looking for nowhere in sight. He grumbled a bit as he got up and fetched more from the chest, cursing Dream for the slight inconvenience of getting up again.

His blade was inexplicably dirty, of course. He used a rag from his pocket and some of the contaminated water he hadn't yet tossed for scrubbing out zombie and spider blood alike. He would either do it now or tomorrow, and though dealing with spider guts and curled blood was unfavorable, it was necessary unless he wanted the stench to linger on him.

It didn't take long, and with his carefulness, it didn't even dirty his clothes. The blade's shine was considered good enough in his eyes, and the murky, purple-tinted water was shoved away with his foot so he could start sharpening and honing the weapon instead.

His eyes stayed on the door as he worked. His tea was half-finished, of the two cups he prepared for himself, and a new, cooling glass sat nearby. Dream would be home soon, though he had to wonder how the guy was.

It was weird how quickly they became friends this close. A week and a half ago, they were strangers. Today, George watched Dream crumble under the weight of thinking he was gone. He wasn't sure when the switch happened. *Our friendship has to be more of a firework than anything*, he thought to himself. *Slow to start, dangerous, and coming in with a bang.*

He forced the word 'beautiful' from his head.

The deft sword was sharpened before he knew it, and when he glanced at his work, he noted he was starting to erode the blade and stopped. His tea was finished now, with only residue liquid pooled at the bottom, and his eyes begged to close. His vision blurred as he turned his attention to the desolate doorframe, but the green-hoodied idiot he hoped would be there was absent. George couldn't stay up and wait for him forever, and he certainly wouldn't go out looking for him this late.

The torch was blown out, his sword laid against the wall, and George grumbled as he crawled back in bed. He shut his eyes and tried to relax and give back into the peaceful, warm embrace of sleep. But, it wasn't to be.

Staggered footsteps and labored breaths interrupted his thoughts, and George stood stock still as they meandered through the cave, and stumbled into the entrance. He couldn't see the figure and was momentarily frightened of the possibility a zombie had found its way into their home while he was alone and underprepared. Then, he heard a metal *clank!* as tools and armor were abandoned at the door, and the unexpected guest cleared their throat. It was Dream.

George was still as rigid as a statue for several paces afterward, but he gradually relaxed and sunk back into his blankets. He listened quietly as Dream grabbed something from their chests and ate

it- bread, maybe?- before the footsteps turned and came up to their bed.

Dream stood barely a foot away, his every move audible as he tried to catch his ragged breath. He didn't move for an antagonizing long minute, and George waited, quiet enough to be mistaken asleep. His eyes were wide open.

The next time Dream moved, it was subtle, quiet, and slow. George heard a small shift in the blankets around him, and what he supposed was Dream's knee pressed against his side. A hand staked at the ground near his head. He suddenly realized Dream was leaning over him, and his brain short-circuited. Nothing happened for a few seconds, and George swore Dream *must* have heard the sound of his heart slamming against his sternum.

The rough, scarred tips of his fingers touched first, lightly gracing his temple and making George flatline. The rest of the work-worn hand trembled as it rested on the side of George's face, and he heard Dream take a shaky inhale that sounded too vulnerable for comfort. *Had he been crying?*

George mentally sighed as Dream cupped his cheek, trying to ignore the swirling in his chest. His friend was still in pain, and he should have known that. He was inconsiderate to think his friend could be over such a recent, hard-hitting flip on his world view in a mere few hours with one hug and talk. George was avoiding the elephant in the room earlier while comforting his friend. He needed to put an end to it.

George tried to come off as unthreatening as he could, but the moment his hand grabbed onto Dream's wrist, his breath hitched, and the boy nearly toppled over trying to jerk away. George's grip kept firm.

"Ah... You're awake. Oops." George could practically hear Dream's nerves, and he loosened his grip when he felt Dream start to shake under it.

"Get in bed." George murmured, just above a whisper. The covers were thrown back, and George could hear him frantically kicking his shoes off before flopping down. George soon let go of his hold on Dream's arm, opting to slide down to lace his fingers in theirs.

"That was really, really weird, and I'm sorry-" Dream started to apologize for his actions, but the grip on his hand tightened, and the words died in his throat.

"It was cheesy at best. Don't worry about it," George muttered, and it was left at that. Dull silence

spread across like salt on a wound, as George tried to organize his next words, and Dream regretted his last.

The cold night air picked up a gentle breeze that wafted in, the smell of saltwater and pollen misting the room. George took a deep breath of the fresh air and decided to address the issue as frankly as possible. Dream had been silent ever since he pulled him back into bed, though George knew the masked adventurer was still wide awake.

“Do I know you, Dream?”

The silence seemed to engulf them in a deafening, almost angry grasp. Even the sound of crickets seemed to die out, and Dream tensed.

“What... Do you mean by that,” Dream started. His voice poured out, hesitant, and almost hoarse. The brown-eyed boy’s pupil’s shrank, and he felt the blood in his veins turn icy. The realization that their memories of each other were mutual hit them both. George went quiet.

Dream, on the other hand, immediately went on edge. A forced, rough, and almost cry-like laugh clawed its way up his throat as he tried to cut through the tension with a joke. “You, um, you know my name, right? I mean, we’ve been traveling with each other for a small while, and, and you-”

George could practically feel Dream’s hand getting clammy and tightening around his as he rambled on, almost to a ridiculous extent. Digging his nails into Dream’s hand seemed to make him pause long enough for the shorter boy to get a word in.

“Dream, stop. Just...” Almost on cue, the other seemed to calm down, at least partially. His breathing, preciously panicked and uneven, slowed to a healthier, though still upbeat rhythm.

“C-Can you tell me what you remember?” The question was soft-spoken and whispered, with no annoyance or anger in his tone. The tension seemed to waver a bit. Dream was silent for a moment as the cogs of his brain turned, and he debated the issue internally. Finally, he clicked his tongue and spoke.

“Yeah.”

The blankets shifted. It took everything in George's power not to jolt when he felt Dream's exhale against their joint hands, but he withheld.

"I killed you." Dream's voice came out a hushed whisper, almost too soft to hear. He hesitated for a long time after that, and George let him, struggling to comprehend the three simple words himself.

"It... Was a game, I think. We were pitted against each other. There were more people, I can't recall them. I... George, I just, killed you. Multiple times." Dream's voice gradually began to rise, and the tight hold he felt on his hand increased synonymous with his worry for his friend.

"I-I hit you bad, once. It was in somewhere, d-dark, and, h-holy shit, there was so much blood, dude, you- s-someone else attacked me, they had an axe, but... I think you bled out before anyone on your team could... George, In the cave today I was- I-I didn't mean, I'm so fucking sorry, I-"

George's hand slipped out of the shaky death grip it was trapped in and found its way around his friend's waist. His chin rested on the huntsman's shoulder before he knew it, and he held his distraught friend as hot tears stained his blue shirt. Dream was quick to adjust to the hug, one hand latching onto the back of his friend's shirt while the other gripped his shoulder.

Dream made a weak attempt to continue speaking, but his sobs on top of a trembling voice made him incoherent and feverish in his endeavors. George shushed him, trying his best to keep his friend calm.

They stayed there for a while, with Dream racking with quiet sobs and staining his best friend's shirt, and George rubbing circles into his friend's back. Dream needed this. Words spoke none compared to actions, and while an explanation might have calmed George down in a similar situation, Dream was his own person, and he needed a tangible sort of comfort. He felt stupid for not realizing that sooner.

But, all things come to an end eventually. Dream's hyperventilated breathing calmed down, slowly, yet surely, until he returned to a somewhat normal. Though tense, his hands no longer held George like he was a moment away from dissipating to dust. George's hand slid up and squeezed Dream's arm comfortingly.

"That isn't your fault, okay? Look, we're okay now. I'm here now." George whispered the words quietly, taking note of Dream to know if he overstepped.

A strained sigh was the only answer he got. He continued.

“I... I don’t know what happened in our past. I remember trying to kill you, and someone in a white shirt, and just... I think there is more to this, Dream.”

He hesitated a moment as he debated talking Dream about something weighing on his mind since the beginning. It’s been a year or more since he first spawned in, it had to have been, and his recollection of that first day wasn’t clear. But... George’s first death happened then. His first night of pure loneliness, where he woke up with jolted screenshots of memories and panicked cries. Those memories still seared his mind, and talking about them would be digging up a distant past he didn’t want to remember. It was more comfortable to hug his friend and support him while he spilled what was bothering him. It was much, much harder for George to do it himself.

But he knew what he knew. He couldn’t live with himself if he didn’t share with Dream.

George locked his leg around Dream’s, one of his hands patting his back. Panic set in, and he stalled. He knew the blonde had stopped moping for a second to turn his attention, and the spotlight was on George. Under pressure, he let himself speak. The words came out broken, curt, and more stuck up than he wanted to sound, not to mention thoroughly soaked in nervousness. But, he spoke.

“When I first spawned in, Dream... I... Had an awful first day,” He explained. Dream’s episode, though some underlying issues, was primarily caused by his death. George himself wasn’t ready to remember the details, either, so oversimplifying his experience was a necessary evil for both their sakes.

“On the first night... I kept having dreams. I can’t remember them, or I would tell you, but it was always just... Snippets of laughter. Of a community, of something wholesome, Dream, it’s...” He trailed off, distracted by Dream’s hand as it ran through his hair.

His head hurt, and he tried desperately to remember those few, scarce memories, for both their sakes, but every time he tried to focus on a snapshot memory, it dashed away, like a thought he was about to voice but left on the tip of his tongue last minute. He couldn’t remember them.

“There was more than just the painful memories Dream. I can’t remember any of them... But I know there’s more to this. We... It’s okay.”

And, it was.

Conversation dimmed, and the night faded into silence, after that. George reshifted to lay on Dream's shoulder at some point, unable to escape his friend's tight hold on him. Not that he'd want to, especially considering how much Dream needed him right now. He'd said enough, and he knew things would only go uphill from here.

Dream would be back to Dream tomorrow: the chaotically sweet adventurer that both enraptured, and endlessly annoyed George. George himself would be back to George: the fun-to-annoy realist who grounded Dream with every light chuckle. Their friendship would be okay. Stronger, even. But they both knew tonight would change things to some extent. They could simply hope it was for the better.

Dream was the first to drift off, tired by the day's antics. George could still smell the ashy scent of coal on his friend's tank, and he was sure the iron's tangy odor hadn't left him, either, even if he'd changed. His consciousness finally allowed him to fade away from stressful thoughts and sink into the simplicities of the moment, relaxed. He wasn't thinking about what tomorrow held anymore, but rather, counting every rise and fall of Dream's chest or how delightfully warm their bedrolls were. As his eyes shuttered and he melted into the warmth of their bed, he couldn't help but smile as the boy thought about how stupidly lucky he had gotten in meeting Dream. How different and fantastic this strange warmth in his chest compared to his first night's emptiness. If he could sink into his best friend's arms forever, he would never get up from this moment.

Chapter End Notes

HEY!! YOU, YOU RIGHT THERE STILL READING THIS BECAUSE I PUT IT IN CAPS! YEAH!

YOU LIKE DANGANRONPA? GOOD. YOU GAY? PROBABLY. MY BEST FRIEND KURT MADE A VERY, VERY GOOD FANFIC, YOU SHOULD TOTALLY CHECK OUT RIGHT HERE!!! PLS GO LOVE ON THEM!!!

(<https://archiveofourown.org/works/25369027/chapters/61513216>)
^^^^^

IT MEANS A LOT!!! TY!!!

{bonus:

[dream, later that night]: throwback to when I somehow managed to go to the bathroom in my dream and piss all over my bed while my best friend was sleeping next to me and we just set up camp and had a spare bedroll and then I cleaned it up without waking him up and acted like nothing happened}

End Notes

friendly reminder: please don't harass dream, george, sapnap, or any of their friends with this. the morality around writing this is sus enough for me in the first place, even with their explicit thumbs up to writers. just. don't. it's not cute and it makes me feel bad.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!